PRACTICAL DISCOURSES CONCERNING DEATH AND HEAVEN.

DISCOVERING

The great Neceſſity of a ſpeedy Preparation for Death; with the danger of neglecting or delaying ſuch Preparations.

ALSO

The Excellency, Glory and Happineſs of Heaven opened and explained, as the Portion of all true Believers after Death.

By *Nathanael Ranew*, late of *London*, Bookſeller.

London, Printed for *N. R.* and ſold by *J. Robinſon*, *A.* and *J. Churchill*, *J. Taylor*, and *J. Wyat*. 1694.

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING HEAVEN AND HELL

TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

THE *Desire of all Men is to be Happy, and the Design of these Discourses is to bring Men to the Enjoyment of the highest Happiness.*

The former Treatise, being a Discourse of Death *and the* Grave, *which are as a Way through which all must pass to the attaining of this Happiness, is that which is not acceptable but grievous unto Flesh and Blood: The Dissolution of the* Union *between Soul and Body; returning to corruption and rottenness in the Grave, where Worms shall gnaw and feed upon those Bodies, that now are the Beauty and Comeliness of this lower Creation, as quickned and animated by Rational and Immortal Souls that inhabit in them; this is that which Nature dreads, and of all things in the World most abhors; and where there are in any no higher Principles to act from, than what is founded in Nature, to such* Death *must needs be very*

terrible because it is that which tends to its ruine and destruction.

Now it being the State and Condition of all Men by Nature, since their Apostacy from God, to have a prevailing Principle and Inclination in them unto the Creature, and to take up with the Enjoyments of this World for their Happiness; when Death *comes to break asunder the Bonds of Life, such Persons are of all Creatures most miserable; and no wonder then if* Death *be formidable unto them.*

If now upon this, or any other account, there be any thing in the pale face of Death, *that makes it have a grim and ghastly Aspect, so that the thoughts of it are frightful and amazing to thee, and thou startest back as one that is afraid to die; yet be not discouraged from studious Meditations of* Death; *for though at the first they may be terrible; yet when thou hast accustomed thy self unto such Contemplations, thou wilt find them very profitable, and such as will by the Blessing of God work thy Heart into such a serious frame, and put thee upon those Endeavours and Practices, as have a tendency in them to fit thee for the approach of* Death, *which will much abate the fears and dread thereof unto thee.*

And as a farther encouragement unto so beneficial an employment, take into thy most serious thoughts the Glory and Happiness of Heaven,

unto

unto which Death *brings all thoſe that are prepared for it; which is the ſubject of the ſecond part of theſe* Diſcourſes, *and truly this is a State of ſo great Bliſs and Happineſs, as may well lift up thy* Soul *above all the diſcouragements of the pains and torments of Sickneſs, the horrours and fears of Death, in the ſeparation of Soul and Body thereby, and the loathſomeneſs and corruption of the* Grave, *and fill thee with vehement longings and deſires after the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of it.*

I need not, I hope, make any Apology *for the publiſhing of that which may be helpful to prepare Chriſtians for* Death *and* Heaven, *and ſuch is the deſign of the following* Diſcourſes; *and that they may be ſo, read them over attentively, meditate on them ſeriouſly, pray over them fervently, and practice what is contained in them diligently and conſtantly, and through the Bleſſing of God they will be effectual to bring thee unto the Happineſs of* Heaven; *which is the earneſt and hearty Deſire, and ſhall be the daily Prayer of the Publiſher. If thou reapeſt any benefit hereby, give God the Glory for his Aſſiſtance herein, and let him have thy Prayers, who deſires nothing ſo much as the Honour of God, and the good of Souls,*

Farewel.

An Introduction.

Practical Preparation for Death.

CHAP. I.

Of Death *in general. Of the ſorts and kinds of* Death *mentioned in Scripture.* Death *befalls all Men; there is no withſtanding of it, nor any priviledged from it. The time of* Death *unknown unto us, yet Fixed and Appointed by GOD.* Death *makes all equal. Sin ſubjects unto* Death.

DEATH is a Subject every Chriſtian ſhould often have in his thoughts, becauſe it is that, unto which he is lyable every moment of his Life; neither the hearing, thinking, nor ſpeaking of it, can therefore be unſeaſonable at any time: And tho' *Conſiderations* of *Death* to living Men, are uſually moſt unwelcome, yet are they as profitable to promote the Intereſt of a Chriſtian as any other; for no Man can *live well*, till he can *dye well*; and no Man is

ſo prepared for *Death*, as he who frequently imploy's his Thoughts in the *Conſideration* of his own *Frailty* and *Mortality*. Indeed Cuſtom hath made it become almoſt an improper thing, either for a Miniſter to *Preach* of *Death*, without the Repreſentation of a *Funeral*, or for one Chriſtian to ſpeak unto another of their *Latter End*, without it be in the Houſe of *Mourning*, where an Example of their Mortality is before their eyes: But if the Mouths of Chriſtians were more frequently filled with Diſcourſes of *Death* and the *Grave*, to which all are haſtening (but know not who ſhall get thither ſooneſt) they would find ſuch Benefit and Advantage thereby (in the quickning and haſtning their Preparations for their diſſolution, that they might always be in a readineſs when *Death* ſhall come) as would infinitely make amends, either for the unaccuſtomarineſs of the Work, or whatever pains and labour they had taken with their hearts, to render them fit for the coming of their Lord.

What *Death* is, is as little known unto ſome, as it is conſider'd by moſt; many take it to be nothing but a Ceſſation of Life, and all actings in this World; and it were well, if there were not too many to be found, who think this to be all that *Death* doth, and when they are thus dead there is an end of them, making themſelves no better than the Beaſt that periſheth. Happy were it for all wicked Men, if *Death* were no more than this: But though *Death* be a Ceſſation of Natural Life, and ſo of all Natural Motion and Action, yet is it more properly a Separation between Soul and Body, whereby the Body becomes a dead unactive thing, becauſe the Soul which is the Principle

ciple of Life and Operation hath forſaken it; but yet *Death*, as it reacheth not the Soul at all, for that lives after its Separation from the Body, ſo it ſhall not for ever keep Soul and Body aſunder, but only until God's appointed Time, and then ſhall the Body be raiſed again out of the Grave by the mighty Power of GOD, and united to the Soul, to live together in a ſtate of Bleſſedneſs or Miſery for ever, according to what they have both been and done together in this World, whether it be good or evil.

But becauſe Generals do not ſo much affect us unto our Edification, I ſhall be a little more particular in my Diſcourſe upon this Subject; and ſo I ſhall ſpeak ſomething concerning *Death*, in a Threefold Sence, as the *Scripture* holds it forth unto us; And ſo there is,

I. *A Death in Sin.*
II. *A Death to Sin:* And,
III. *A Death for Sin.*

Firſt, There is a *Death in Sin*; this the *Scripture* mentions often, 5 *John* 25. *The hour is coming and now is, when the Dead ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear ſhall live:* So 5 Epheſ. 14. *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ſtand up from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee Light. So let the dead bury the dead*, Mat. 8. 22. This *Death in Sin*, conſiſts in the want of a Principle of Spiritual Life, being the deprivation of the Life of Grace and Holineſs, which is the Life of the Soul, and without which the Soul is dead. And thus all Men naturally are dead; becauſe they are without the Spirit of Chriſt, which enlivens and

quickens the Soul to all Acts of Grace and Holineſs, wherein this *Spiritual* Life doth manifeſt it ſelf, as the Soul enlivens and quickens the Body unto all Acts of Nature, wherein the natural Life doth manifeſt it ſelf. That all Men are thus *dead in Sin*, naturally is evident from *Scripture*, 2 *Epheſ.* 1,2,3. The Apoſtle writing to the *Epheſians*, who by the Almighty Power of God were raiſed from this Spiritual Death, as he tells them in the Firſt *Verſe*, *And you hath he quickned, who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, that he might beget in them a grateful Senſe of God's Goodneſs towards them herein: He deſcribes to them their former deplorable Condition; *Wherein*, ſays he, *in times paſt, ye walked according to the Courſe of the World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that worketh in the Children of Diſobedience:* And in *Ver.* 3. the *Apoſtle* puts himſelf into the Number, *Among whom*, ſays he, *we all had our Converſation in times paſt, in the luſts of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh, and of the mind, and were by nature Children of Wrath, even as others.* And then in the fourth *Verſe* he gives them to underſtand, by whom they were raiſed out of ſo miſerable an Eſtate; *But God*, ſays he, *who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickned us together with Chriſt; by Grace ye are ſaved.* Now this *Spiritual Death*, or this *Death in Sin*, is the fruit and effect of our firſt Parents Apoſtacy from God, whereby we are not only deprived of the Image of God, which is the *Beauty*; yea, the *Life* of the Soul, but are alſo depraved with the Image of the Devil, which is not only the *Deformity* of the Soul, but even as *Death* unto it. And becauſe this is a *Spiritual Death*,

Death, and reacheth chiefly to the Soul; it is therefore the more hurtful and dangerous, though the effects of it extends it self to the Body also, being that which is the Cause of Natural *Death*; for therefore the Body is a frail dying Body, because it is joyned to a sinful Soul; but this is not all the Mischief it doth; for this *Death in Sin*, unless Grace prevent, is that which ends in *Eternal Death*, which consists in an everlasting separation of Soul and Body from the eternal Enjoyment of God in Heaven, *in whose presence there is fulness of Joy, and at whose right hand there are Pleasures for evermore.*

Secondly, There is a *Death to Sin*; of this we read, *Rom.* 6. 2. *How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?* So in 1 *Pet.* 2. 24. *That we being dead to sin should not live any longer therein.* This *Death to sin* consists in the Spirits indwelling in the Soul, by its sanctifying Operations, enabling the Soul to mortifie sin: Hence the Apostle tells us, *Rom.* 8. 13. *That if through the Spirit we mortifie the deeds of the Body we shall live.* Such therefore who have felt the Efficacy of an Almighty Power from the Death of Christ, by the Operation of the Spirit, applying of it to their Souls, to break the power and strength of sin, so that it doth not reign in them, they may be said to be dead to sin, because sin is dying in them: As those Persons over whom Distempers have prevailed so far, that they have lost their bodily strength, that it cannot be recovered again, are said to be dead even while they live; so, tho' sin still live in the godly, by reason of the Remainders of it, yet are they *dead to sin*, because the Power and Strength of it is abated and lessened, the Spirit of Sanctification prevailing dayly over sin, so that it doth not rule and reign as formerly it did.

Thus to *dye to sin*, is to be made alive to God, and blessed are they that have a part in this Resurrection from the death of sin, to the life of Grace; for on such the second Death shall have no Power.

Thirdly, There is a *Death for Sin*, or because of sin. Now this is Two-fold, *Temporal* and *Eternal*.

1. *Temporal Death:* This is contained in that merciful Threatning God gave unto *Adam* in Paradice, to prevent his Apostacy, *Gen.* 2. 16, 17. where, after God had so largely expressed his bounty and goodness unto man, in giving him liberty *to eat of every Tree of the Garden*, restraining him only by a Command from the Tree of Knowledge, for the Tryal of his Obedience, as *Ver.* 17. *Of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat*; which he backs with a Threatning in the next Words: *For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely dye.* The Truth of which Threatning the Experience of all Mankind to this day, is a standing Confirmation; so true is that of the Apostle, *As by one Man sin enter'd into the World, and Death by sin; and so Death passed upon all, for that all have sinned*, Rom. 5. 12.

2. There is an *Eternal Death* for sin, and this follows upon the *Death* of the *Body*, consisting in the separation of Soul and Body, from the Presence and Favour of God for ever in Hell, and is in part executed on the Souls of wicked Men at Death, and perfectly upon Soul and Body at the Resurrection, when the *Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and punished with everlasting destruction from*

from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his Power; which in *Scripture* is called the Second Death. Rev. 21. 8. *Where wicked and unregenerate persons are said to have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the Second Death.* This is the height and perfection of all Misery.

This now is the Substance of what is contained in this Word *Death*, so far as Words can explain it, which if we consider in all the forementioned Sences, it is that which we cannot comprehend; all that hath been said of it, is but like the painting of the fire to the eye, which expresseth not the pain and anguish that is in it, unto the Senses: For if we understand by *Death*, a *Temporal*, *Spiritual* and *Eternal Death*, I may allude to what the Psalmist saith of the Power of God's Anger, *Who knows the Power of thine Anger*? So who knows the dreadfulness of the Horror and Pain that is contained in thee O *Death*, according to our Fear of thee? So, yea, and much greater, is the Misery which the wrath of God by thee inflicts upon all those that live and dye in their sins.

But though *Death* be thus terrible, yet is it the more common acceptation of it, that chiefly affects the generality of Mankind; for, as for *Spiritual Death*, or *Death in sin*, because of the present pleasures and Delights which bewitch the Senses; this they are insensible of: And as for *Eternal Death*, that is looked upon by many as a *Dream*, or *Notion*, as a thing that may never be, or if among some it be credited for a Truth, yet is it looked upon as that which is a great way off; and if the terror of it doth startle the Consciences of some, yet are they soon quieted with such thoughts as these, Christ dyed for all, and God is a merciful God;

and

and ſo they hope all ſhall be well with them.

But now for *Temporal Death*, which conſiſts in the ſeparation of the Soul from the Body; this is ſo much *Death* to them, that they think there is no other but that, at leaſt, they apprehend none ſo prejudicial to them This is a Truth ſo evident, that which way ſoever they go or turn, objects of Mortality preſent themſelves before their eyes in the *Death* of *Friends*, *Relations*, and others, whereby the reigning *Power* of *Death* over all is viſible, ſweeping away all Men before it into the Grave, the place of ſilence and rottenneſs; yea, themſelves are not without ſome ſymtoms of their *approaching diſſolution*, *diſeaſes and diſtempers*, as well as *buſineſs* and *employments*, waſting and conſuming their bodies dayly, whereby they may be convinced that they alſo are made of the ſame *Mould*, and muſt ſhortly be crumbled into the ſame *Duſt* with others. Thus *Death* meeting with them ſo often, and ſtaring them ſo frequently in their faces, gives them to underſtand that there is no way for them to eſcape its ſtroke, the thoughts whereof cannot but now and then make them *fear* and *tremble*.

But though nothing be more *certain* than *Death*, yet nothing is more *uncertain* than the Time of *Death*: For though all ſhall dye, yet all do not dye at the ſame time, nor after the ſame manner: To ſome God gives long Warning, Nature waſting and conſuming in them by lingring Diſtempers; with others God is more quick, ſhooting them with an Arrow as it were, and ſuddenly they are wounded unto Death and Deſtruction: Some *their hoary Heads are found in the Way of Righteouſneſs*, *and they come to their Graves in a good old Age*; others ariſe early to that height of

Impiety.

Impiety, that the Earth groans under the burthen of their great Wickedneſs; and God is ſo provoked thereby, that he cauſeth *the Earth to ſwallow them up quick*; to ſome the *Promiſe* of *Long Life*, made for an Encouragement to Obedience and Holy Walking, is turned into a *Performance*, *God ſatisfying them with length of days*, and then leaves them *to depart in peace*, *ſhewing them his Salvation*; others God cuts off in the midſt of their *days*, and of their ſins alſo, and they *go down quick into the Grave*, and into *Hell* too. Though the days of a good Man, at the moſt are but few, yet becauſe of ſome *ſpecial Goodneſs*, they are often prolonged: ſo though the days of a wicked Man at the moſt are but few, yet becauſe of ſome *ſpecial Wickedneſs* they are often ſhortned: The Wiſe Man proves this Aſſertion, *Prov.* 10. 27. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth, or adds to days, but the days of the wicked ſhall be ſhortned.* As every Man becauſe he is a Sinner ſhall live but few days; ſo ſome ſhall not live half their days, becauſe they are *Notorious Sinners*. The ſhort of it is this, *Death* doth not always give *Warning*, how many riſe in the Morning, that make their *Beds* in the *Grave* before the *Evening*? How many go well to *Bed* at *Night*, whoſe *Sleep* is their *Death*, and they ariſe no more until the Morning of the Reſurrection? How often have we ſeen many projecting for themſelves and theirs, great things in the World, *laying houſe to houſe, and land to land*, that with the *Fool* in the *Goſpel*, they might *eat, drink & be merry for many years*, when on a ſudden, or in that very *Night their ſouls have been taken from them*? To preſume therefore of *Long Life*, and thereupon to neglect to prepare for *Death*, is the greateſt piece of Folly imaginable; for ſcarce is [illegible]

Week passeth over our heads, wherein we may not hear of some or other that are suddenly gone into another World, and that which hath been the Case of others may be ours also. It is the sad Condition of a *wicked Man*, let him *dye* how and when he will, he dies *miserably*; if *Death* cut him off *suddenly*, then he goes down quick into Hell, that Gulf of all Woe and Misery: If *Death* gives him long Warning by a succession of many years distempers, yet all this while he doth but *pine away in his Iniquity*, and encreaseth his Misery when *Death* shall cut him off, and throw him into that place of Torment, the pain and anguish whereof is so great, that it cannot be sufficiently expressed, no not by them that feel it. But now it is the happiness of a *godly Man*, let him *dye* never so suddenly, yet he always *dyes* happily, because he is in a state of *Peace* and *Reconciliation* with *God*; it is true, he may *dye* without a sence and feeling of that *Peace*, and so his passing thorow the Valley of the *Shadow* of *Death* may be terrible to him, but still *God* is with him; and though the eye of his Faith be held, so that he cannot discern him to be *his God*, though his *Rod and his Staff do not comfort him*, yet they do support and strengthen him, and as soon as *Death* hath opened his eyes, he beholds the face of *God* to his everlasting joy and satisfaction. Doth *Death* then come *certainly*, and sometimes *suddenly?* It is thy Wisdom, O *Christian*, always to be prepared for it, and then let it come when it will, tho' this Night, thou maist bid it welcome.

But as *Mans Life* is *short and frail*, so is his *Death sure and certain*, for it is the common lot of all Men. Man, saith *Job*, that is all Men, are *good* to dye; it is the *way of all the Earth*, it is the

the *end of all Men*. *Who is he that lives and ſhall not ſee Death? No Man can redeem his Brothers*, no nor his own Life from *Death*; *that he ſhould ſtill live for ever and not ſee Corruption*, ſuch a ſufficient Ranſome no man can give to God: Chriſt is indeed become a *Ranſome* for *Believers*, but it is to deliver them not from the *firſt*, but from the *ſecond Death*; for as to the *firſt Death*, *it is appointed unto all Men once to dye*. Some have a longer time in this world, and others a ſhorter, but all dye; one goes before, and another follows after; one Man rots in the Grave and makes it empty, that he which is yet alive, may have a place to lye down therein. *We all dwell in houſes of clay*, *whoſe foundations are in the duſt*, which will ſhortly tumble down into it. *Earthly Tabernacles* we have that muſt be *diſſolved*, and laid in the *Earth*; here we have no *abiding place*: *Death* and the *Grave* will ſhortly take all, for *all go to one place*, *all are of the duſt*, *and all turn to duſt again*, *Eccleſ.* 3. 20. Some are ſent before, and others follow after, but all go the ſame way; ſome have a long Race to run, others but a ſhort, but Death is at the end of both. To him that is old Death is certainly near, and to him that is young, Death is not far off: He that *dyes* not till he is old, *travels* a long way before he meets with *Death*; whereas he that *dyes* young hath but a ſhort way to his *long home*, Death meeting him betimes; but ſtill whither *young* or *old*, all muſt dye, the *decree* is gone forth, and there is no reverſing of it. *There is an appointed time to Man upon Earth*, as *Job* ſpeaks, and when that is expired, Death cuts him off and throws him into the *Grave*, *the houſe appointed for all living*. Death is *inexorable*, it ſpares none, and the *Grave* is *in-*

ſatiable

riable, it is not satisfied with any, when it hath the *Husband*, it gapes for the *Wife*; when it hath the *Parent*, it gapes for the *Child*; when it hath one *Generation*, it gapes for another; *one Generation passeth away, and another Generation cometh*; and the latter crowds the former out of the world. No Man hath a *dispensation* against Death, there must be a *dissolution* of all things, and therefore *a dissolution of all Men.*

No Man hath more *Priviledge* than another against the Sentence of Death; the greatest *Prince dyes* as soon as the *meanest Peasant*: Neither *Power*, nor *Wisdom*; neither *Strength* nor *Rickes*, neither *Beauty* nor *Honour*, nor any outward *Excellency* whatsoever, can protect any against the *stroke of Death*; these things can do much among Men, yea every thing, but they avail not against Death, *powerful* Death despiseth them all. *Power* can do nothing to ward off the stroke of Death from any; where is *Alexander*, and *Cæsar*, and all the *Great Conquerors* of the *World*; why they and all their *Greatness* and *Power* are gone down into the *Grave*; and after all their *Conquests* over others, have yielded themselves up as *conquered by Death.* There is no *Title* can be given unto Man, which sets him farther off from Death, than to call him *God*, and this high *Title God himself* hath *honoured*, some Men with, *Psal.* 82. 6. 7. *I said ye are Gods*, but least they should be lifted up with *Pride*; with the same *Breath* he adds an humbling Consideration to take down all proud and lofty Thoughts, *but ye shall dye like Men. Kings* and *Princes* that are the greatest for *worldly Power*, and have the *priviledge* to be called *Gods*, yet have they not the *priviledge* of *God*, not to *dye* like *men.*

No

No Mans *Wiſdom* can ſave him from *dying*; Death will be too hard for the moſt *cunning Politician*: *Wiſdom* is an *excellent Gift of God*, and renders a Perſon lovely in the Eyes of all. *it makes a mans face to ſhine*; it ſets a *Glory* and *Beauty* upon a Mans Perſon and Actions; a Man can hardly give a *greater Commendation* of any Man, than to ſay he is a *Wiſe Man*; and yet of *Solomon*, not only the *wiſeſt* of *Kings*, but the *wiſeſt* of *Men*; it is ſaid, that *he ſlept with his Fathers, as well as others*; and though *he* tells us *Wiſdom excells Folly, as far as Light excells Darkneſs*; yet we know *wiſe men dye, as well as the fooliſh and bruitiſh perſon*: We read indeed of a *poor Wiſe Man*, that by his *Wiſdom delivered a City*; but we never read of any that by their *Wiſdom* delivered themſelves or others from Death; no, *for as there is no work, no deviſe in the Grave whither we are going*; ſo is there no *Knowledge* or *Wiſdom* that can keep a man from going into the *Grave*, Eccleſs. 9. 10.

No Man by his *ſtrength* can *overcome* Death; Bodily health and *ſtrength* are no defence at all againſt Death: It is true, they are great Mercies where God gives them unto any, *a ſickly weakly Man* is burthenſome to himſelf and others, though God heaps upon him other Mercies in abundance, as *Wealth*, *Honours* and *Relations*, yet he takes little delight in them, the want of *Health* imbitters all; whereas a *Man* that is *healthful* and *ſtrong*, takes *delight* in every *Comfort* and *Enjoyment*, though it be even poor and mean in compariſon of what others have: but though *health* and *ſtrength* be ſo *great* a *Mercy*, yet can they not withſtand the *Power* of Death, they may make a man *dye* with *ſtrong pains* upon his bed, but they cannot defend him againſt Death. If God beſtow upon any of us a *ſtrong healthy*

Body,

Body, it is a great Mercy, and we ought to be thankful for it, but we may be ſoon laid in the *Grave* for all that. Death ſhould not be a *ſtranger* to us, becauſe *ſickneſs* and *diſtempers* are *ſtrange things* to us, for we have not long *Life*, much leſs can we eſcape the *ſtroke* of *Death*, becauſe we are *healthy* and *ſtrong*, *for in the fullneſs of our ſtrength we may be in Death*; one dyeth in the fullneſs of his ſtrength, when his Bones are full of Marrow: As for the *ſtrength* of any *Man*, though he be a *Sampſon*, yet this great *Leviathan* Death counts it but as *ſtraw*, and the *ſoundeſt* and *pureſt health*, but as *rotten wood*. *David complains that the Sons of* Zerviah *were too hard for him*. But there are none ſuch that are too *hard* for Death; Death ſtays not to take men at *advantage*, when they are *weakned* with *age* and *ſickneſs*, as *Simeon* and *Levy* did the *Schecemites* when *they* were *ſore*, *Gen.* 34. 25. No Death can do its *work* as *eaſily* and as *ſpeedily* in *health* as in *ſickneſs*, in *ſtrength* as under *weakneſs*.

No man by his *Riches* can *protect* himſelf againſt Death; all the *Riches* in the world are too low a *Value* to *ranſome* any from Death and the Grave. *Solomon* tells us, *Money anſwers all things*; and indeed *rich Men* can do great things by their *Wealth*; many ſeek the favour of ſuch, their *Riches* make them many *Friends*: The *Wiſe Man* tells us, *The rich mans wealth is his ſtrong City*, Prov. 18. 11. by reaſon whereof they truſt to their *Wealth*, and *boaſt themſelves in the multitude of their Riches*, thinking they are well provided for againſt all Evils: What made the *rich Man* in the Goſpel elſe ſo confidently ſay to his Soul, *Thou haſt Goods laid up for many years, eat, drink and be merry*: But Death would not be put off ſo, for that Night was his *Soul* taken from him, notwith-

withstanding all his great Possessions. It is in vain to cry out on a *Death Bed* with that wretched *Cardinal Beauford* in *Henry* the Sixth Time, *Wherefore should I dye being rich, will not Death be bribed? Will Money do nothing?* No truly it cannot; for as *Riches profit not in the day of Wrath* to *pacifie* the *Justice* of an angry God; so neither will they *profit* in the *day* of *Death* to *bribe* that *King* of *Terrors*.

Beauty, is another *outward Excellency* that many *glory* in; and indeed it is a great *Ornament*, a Gift of GOD and no small one, it is a taking thing. We delight in things that are *beautiful*: *Beauty* to some is a *Portion* among men, to others a *favour* from *God*. It is a *silent Eloquence*, a *tacite Perswasion*, and works much upon some: What is said of the *Church*, *Psal.* 45. 11. *So shall the King greatly desire thy Beauty*; I know it is spoken there of *Spiritual Beauty*, the *Graces* of the *Spirit* of *God*, which *beautifie* and *adorn* the *Church* in the *eyes* of *Christ*; for it is said the *KING's Daughter is all glorious within*: But yet it is true also in some measure of *outward Corporeal Beauty*, it is a *desireable thing*, and may duly be an *attractive* of *Love*; it is that which draws the *Eyes* and *Hearts* of many, tho' often it is an *incentive* to *Lust*, both to *great Men* and to *good Men*. *Solomon loved strange Women*, the Scripture saith, *and they turned away his heart from God*; and having smarted severely for it, as a *fruit* of the *sincerity* of his *Repentance*, and to *prevent* so great wickedness in others he hath left us many *Excellent Cautions* and *Counsels* in *Sacred Writ*, against the *ensnaring Temptations* and *powerful Charms of Beauty*. But though Men are deluded and deceived by *beautiful Objects* and *Persons*, yet Death is not: A *beautiful Face* is as mortal, and as soon, yea sooner

many

many times turned into *dust* and *corruption*, than a *face* that is *deformed*. Death regards a *goodly well favoured Joseph* or *Absolom*, no more than a *leprous Uzziah* or *Gehazi*; nor doth it spare a *beautiful Rachel* more than a *blear ey'd Leah*: *Favour* is *deceitful*, and *Beauty is vain in this respect*, for they profit none in a dying hour; the *beautifulest Person*, and the most *lovely Complexion* is quickly turned into *Paleness* and *Corruption*, when once the time of their *dissolution* is come; Death soon making those, that for their *Beauty* and *Comeliness* were most *admired* by others become most *loathsome* and *intolerable*, and they most *desirous* with *Abraham* to *bury* such *dead out of their sight*.

By what hath been said, it appears that all Men, notwithstanding all their *great Attainments in Worldly Excellences*, are not *exempted* from *dying*: And as no *outward*, so no *inward Excellency* and *Perfection* can *priviledge* any from Death, no not *Grace* it self *Grace* is as Salt to the *Soul* to *preserve* it from *Moral Corruption* for ever, but it cannot *preserve* the *Body* from *Natural Corruption* in this World: In *Heaven*, where there shall be nothing but *Grace* and *Holiness* in the *Soul* in *perfection*, there, there shall be no *dying*; but here on *Earth*, where *Grace* is *imperfect*, being mingled with *Sin* and *Corruption*, there is a necessity of *dying*. Death is become *domestical* to us, we have the Seed of it within us, we carry it *daily* in our *bosoms*; I mean in the *body* of *Sin*, as the *Apostle* calls it; that we carry about with us, which will never be *extirpated* and *destroyed* till the death of the *body*.

All our *Prayers* and *Tears* cannot prevent Death. *Prayer* can do great things, to instance in particulars

culars of its *Prevalency* would be endless. Our Lord himself tells us, *That whatever we ask the Father in his Name he will give it us*, John 16. 23. That is an *Astonishing Scripture*. Esay 45. 11. *Thus saith the Lord, The Holy One of* Israel, *and his Maker, Ask me of things to come, concerning my Sons, and concerning the Works of my hands command ye me.* As if, *saith* one, *God* was as ready to do them service, as if they had him at *their Command*. There is a kind of *Omnipotency* in *Prayer*, and therefore it is said of *Jacob*, that as a *Prince he had power with God, and prevailed*, *Gen.* 32. 28. And the *Apostle* tells us, *The effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much*; how much the *Apostle* could not tell us, but leaves it to every one to make *Observations* from their own *Experience*. But though *Prayer* can do such *great things*, yet it cannot *prevent* Death: *We* read indeed that the *Prayer of Faith* doth *save* the *Sick*; but though it can even *restore* from a *sick-bed*, yet it cannot *raise* from a *Death-bed*. Nay, *Christ himself* hath not so *Redeemed* us that we should *live* for *ever*, and not see *Corruption*; he hath *Redeemed* us that we shall *live* for *ever* in *Heaven*, but he hath not *Redeemed* us that we should *live* for *ever* on *Earth* and not *dye*; no, it was the *Priviledge* of *Jesus Christ* the *Redeemer*, that he should not *see Corruption*, and therefore of him only it is said, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, nor suffer thy Holy One to see Corruption.*

But may some say, this *necessity* of *dying* seems not to be *unalterably* imposed upon all Men; for some have *lived* who never *dyed*, and some shall *live* hereafter that shall not *dye*.

1 Answer: It is true, the *Scripture* makes mention of *Two*, and but *Two*, that *lived* here on *Earth*, and by *special Grace* and *Favour* were exempted from Death, ascending up unto *God*, leaping over Death and the *Grave* as it were in their passage to *Heaven*, and they are *Enoch* and *Elias*: concerning *Enoch*, it is said, *That by Faith he was translated, that he should not see Death*, Heb. 11. 5. He was a *Person eminent* for *Holiness*; for it is said, *That he walked with God three hundred years*, and *obtained* this *Testimony before his Translation, that he pleased God*, Gen. 5. 22. And being such an *Eminent Proficient* in Grace, as that there was none that we read of like him at that time; he obtained such *Grace* and *Favour* from *God*, as none did; for it is said, *He walked with GOD, and he was not, for GOD took him.* O the *Excellency* of *Grace* and *Holiness*, how *highly* doth it *ennable* and *advance a Man! Enoch walked with God*, and *God* thinks the *Earth* not good enough for him, and therefore he takes him to himself into *Heaven*; nay, this is not all, so much was *God* taken with the *Holiness* of *Enoch*, that he shall not *go* to *Heaven* in the *ordinary way* as other *Saints* do by Death, but he shall be *translated* from *Grace* to *Glory* without so much as looking into the *Grave*. The like we *read* of *Elias* another *eminent* and *zealous Servant of God*, 2 King. 2. 23. *That he was taken up in a fiery Chariot by a Whirl-wind into Heaven.* So *great* was his *Zeal* for *God* and his *Glory*, and so highly did *God* esteem it, and him for it, that he must not *abide* any *longer* on *Earth*, but be *taken* up into *Heaven*, and that in no other way, but by a *fiery Chariot*; a *Passage* to *Heaven* that did *bear some Resemblance* to his *Zeal* for *God* while he was here on *Earth*.

The

The *Apoſtle* alſo tells us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 51. *That at the laſt Day we ſhall not all dye, but we ſhall all be changed*; and 1 *Theſ.* 4. 17. *We that are alive, and remain, ſhall be caught up with him in the Clouds to meet the Lord, and ſo ſhall we be ever with the Lord.* Theſe Exceptions of *ſome few* that have not *dyed*, nor ſhall not *dye*, do not at all make void this *general* Truth that all ſhall *dye*, but rather make for the *Confirmation* of it. The general *Rule* or *Law* ſaith, all muſt *dye*, none eſcape but by *ſpecial Grace* or *Priviledge*; and though the *Saints* that ſhall be found on Earth at the *Reſurrection* of the *dead*, dye not, yet they ſhall undergoe that which is *equivalent* unto Death, for they ſhall be *changed*. Death is call'd a *Change*; ſo ſaith *Job*, *All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change ſhall come*: And they that are alive at the *Laſt Day*, undergoe a *Change* alſo: The *Change* of Death is a putting off of our *Mortality*, but the *Change* at the *Laſt Day*, is a *putting on* of our *Immortality*; The one is a *Change* by being *uncloathed*, the other is a *Change* by being *cloathed upon*, but both is a *Change*: And thus all *dye*, or ſhall be *changed*.

By what hath been ſaid, it is very evident, That Death befalls all men one time or other, ſooner or later. But for the Manner, how, or the Time when any ſhall *dye*, this is unknown unto any. The *Living* may and do know that they ſhall *dye*, but they know not when they ſhall *dye*. What our *Lord ſaith* of the *day* of *Judgment*, is true of the *day* of Man's Death; of that *day* and *hour knoweth no Man*. Many a Man hath been miſtaken concerning the *purpoſe* of *God*; *I ſaid* ſays *David*, in my *proſperity*, that I ſhall *never* be *moved*, but he was *miſtaken*; for he adds in the next words almoſt, *But thou didſt hide thy face, and*

I was

I was troubled. Much more may we be mistake concerning the *Time* of our Death. *I said,* [s]ay Hezekiah, *in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the Grave; I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the Land of the Living: I shall no more behold man with the Inhabitants of the World* Good *Hezekiah* thought there was no way for him to escape Death, but he was *mistaken*; for afterwards he tells us, *God* had in *Love* to his *Soul, delivered* it from the *Pit* of *Corruption*, and he *Lived fifteen Years* longer after he had given himself over for dead. A Man may have the *Sentence* of Death in himself, when as to that particular time, *God* hath given out none against him: So on the other hand, the *Rich Man* in the *Gospel* reckons not of Death till *many years* hence, and he is very liberal to his *Soul*, because *God* had been bountiful to his *Body*; he had got a *great Stock* of *Riches*, and he *gives* himself a *rich stock* of *Time*, even *many years*, he resolves to make his *Life* larger, as he had done his *Barns*; and because they are *full* of *Corn*, he also will be *full* of *Days*; whereas the *Word* came out against him from *God*, *Thou Fool, this night shall thy Soul be taken from thee*, and he that before resolved to *Live many years*, could not now *Live* till the *next Morning*. It is our *Wisdom* always to be prepared for Death, but its more than belongs to us *peremptorily* to *determine* the *Time* of our Death, or the *Length* of our *Days*.

But though the *Time* of our Death be *unknown* to us, yet is it *known* to, and *fixed* by *God*, he hath determined, not only the *Time* when, but also the *Place* where, and the *Manner* how we shall *dye*, with all the *Circumstances* relating thereunto. It is *God* that turns up the Glass of our *Time*,

Time, and puts ſuch a *Meaſure* of *Sand* into it, and no more; *ſuch* a *Meaſure*, that it *may* and *ſhall run* ſo *long*, and *no more*; that it *ſhall run no longer* than his *Appointment*. *God ſpeaking* after the manner of Men, is *ſaid* in *Scripture* to have a *Book*, wherein is *written* down, not only the *Number* of *our Sins*, but alſo the *Number of our days*; and as we cannot *commit* a *Sin* but it is *written* down in *ſome Leaſe* of his *Book*; ſo can we not *live* a *day*, or *hour*, that hath not *our Name written* down upon it in *Gods Book*. That *ſome* have the *Time* of Life confined only to the *dark Cell* of the *Womb*, and never ſee the *Light*; that *others* are *ſtrangled* in the *place* of *breaking* forth of *Children*, and are only *Cauſes* of *Grief* to them that *bear* them: that *others dy* in their *Infancy*, without the *Knowledge* of *good* or *evil*, and leave only *ſad Remembrances* to *their Parents*, that once they were; that *others* grow up to *years* of *Diſcretion*, but are *cut off* in the *prime* of their *days*, and in their *full ſtrength*; and that *others* live to *extream old Age*, till *Nature* is wholly *ſpent* and *conſumed* in them: All this is from the *Appointment of God*; they all fill up the *Number* of thoſe *Days*, and the *meaſure* of that *Time*, that *God* hath allotted to them, and then they *depart* according to *his Will*. How many have we ſeen caſt upon *ſick beds*, whom *God* hath there *viſited* with *ſtrong pains*, bringing them ſo low, that their *Lives* ſeem'd to be brought unto the *Grave*, and themſelves *numbred* with *them* that *go down into the Pit*, *free among the dead*, *and as the ſlain that lye in the Grave*, given over by themſelves, and all others for ſuch; and yet even *theſe* God hath *raiſed* up again, *ſhewing Wonders as it were to the dead*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, cauſing them to *ariſe*, and *praiſe*

his

his *Name*. What's the *Reason* of all this? When *God*'s *appointed Time* was not come, and ſo *Diſeaſes* could have no further *Power* over them. And what is true of *Sickneſs*, is as true of *Men* who are but like *Diſeaſes*, *Executioners* of *God*'s *Decree* upon Man; even they have no *Power* to *lengthen Life*, or to *haſten Death*, but what is given them from above. *God* hath not only ſet us the *bounds* of our *Habitations*, but the *bounds* of our *Living* alſo. *Job ſpeaks* much to the *ſtating* and *determining* of this *Caſe*, *Job*. 7. 1. *Is there not an appointed Time to Man upon Earth:* Now in an *Appointment* of *God*, there muſt be a *Certainty*, or elſe we make him like unto a *mortal Man*, that is *changeable*, which cannot be. Therefore Man having an *appointed Time* by God upon Earth, he muſt *reach* to it, and he cannot go *beyond* it: But *Job* further explains it in the next Words, *Are not his days as the days of an Hireling?* Now an *Hireling* is one that hath *days* or *time prefixed* or *ſet*, which he muſt *fulfil*, and then he is *diſcharged* from his *Employment:* And ſo it is with Man, *God* hath ſet him his *Time*, which when he hath *accompliſhed*, Death by *God's Appointment* comes and *diſchargeth* him from his *Work*; ſo in *Job* 14. 5. *Job* tells us, *Mans days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou haſt appointed his bounds, beyond which he cannot paſs. And all the days of my appointed Time*, ſaith he, *will I wait till my Change ſhall come.* Mans *Life* is *appointed*, and *fixed* by God, his *days* are *determined* by him: We know not how *long* we ſhall *live*, but *God* doth; he gives us out our *days* and our *months* by *Tale*, the *number* of his *months* are with thee. Whatever Man is *Lord* of, he is not *Lord* of his *Time*. We cannot *diſpoſe* of one *minute* for *our ſelves* or *others*.

thers. We *live* not by our *own Wills*, if we did, who would *dye?* Nor do we *live* at the *Will* of thers, for who of us then would *live*, or at leaſt *ive long?* But we *live* at the *Will* of *God*, *Tenants* we are at his *Will*, he gives us the *Leaſe* of our *Lives*, and for what *Years* he pleaſeth; He is *Lord* of *Time*, and therefore he hath *Power* to *appoint* to one man a *greater*, to another man a *leſſer* meaſure of *Time*, as ſeems good unto him. *David* therefore, when his *Enemies* were taking *Counſel* againſt him to *take* away *his Life*, bears up his *Spiris* with this as a comfortable Conſideration, *My Times are in thy hands O Lord*, Pſal. 31 15. The *Jews* we know deſign'd the *Death* of *Chriſt* a long time, but they could not *accompliſh* it, till *his hour was come*, and therefore when he was brought before *Pilate* to be judged, ſays *Pilate* to him, *Knoweſt thou not that I have Power to Crucify thee, and have Power to releaſe thee*; No, ſays *Chriſt*, thou haſt no *ſuch Power* of thy ſelf, neither couldſt thou have any *ſuch Power*, *except it were given thee from above*. What *Chriſt* ſaid of himſelf, is true of every Man, he *lives* not after, nor *dyes* before his *hour is come*: Our *Friends* cannot lengthen our *days*, nor can our *Enemies* ſhorten them; no, it is *God* that holds our *Souls* and *Lives* in being, and when he pleaſeth, and not before, *we return unto our Duſt*. *God* hath determined our *days* to us, and *God* keeps the *reckoning* of our *days* for us; and if, as our *Lord* tells us, *That a Sparrow falls not to the ground without our Father, and that the very hairs of our heads are all numbred:* Surely then the *days* of our *Lives* are *numbred*. The *hairs* of the *head* are the meaneſt part of us, and indeed but a *ſtringy Excrement*, and there are ſuch *numerous multitudes* of them, that it is a kind

of

of a *Wonder* that they can be *numbred*, or any *Account* kept of them, but yet to shew that the *Providence* of *God extends* its self to the *least things*, it *extends* to the *numbring* of our *hairs*, much more than to the *numbring* of our *days*: But,

Though Death *observes the Order* and *Appointment* of *God*, yet it *observes* no *Order* among men: It *fears* none for their *greatness*, nor *spares* none for their *goodness*, nor *despiseth* any for their *lowness*. Though *Christians* are *Souldiers*, and in a continual *Warfare* with their *Spiritual Enemies*, obeying the Commands of the *Captain* of their *Salvation* while they live, yet do they *observe* no *Order*, nor keep to any *Rule* in *dying*. The *Old* go not always before the *Young*, nor the *Rich* before, and the *Poor* following after. Death hath no *Master* of *Ceremonies*, but it takes *promiscuously*, here a *Child*, and there a *Man*; here a *Rich Man*, and there a *Beggar*; here a *strong Man*, and there a *weak Man*; here a *Master*, and there a *Servant*. The *Law* of *Nature* saith, that a Man in his *full strength* is not so likely to *dye*, as one that is *wither'd* with *Old Age*; it sets Death further off from one whose *breasts* are full of *milk*, and their *bones moistened* with *marrow*. The *Law* of *Nature* saith, O Death, go to the *wrinkled face*, to the *dry bones*, to those, the *Infirmities* and *Weaknesses* of whose *Age* are so many and so afflictive, that they seem to have no *Pleasure* in their *Lives*, but are *desirous* of thy *presence* and *company*. O Death, for their *ease* and *relief*: But O meddle not with this *goodly young Man*, or that *beautiful Woman*, *alas*, they are but now in the *flower* of their *days*, and in the *prime* of their *years*, and therefore spare them. But Death will not *Answer* nor *Regard* these

theſe *Requeſts*; for *Death* obſerves not the *Law* of *Nature*, but the *Appointments* of *God*, who is the *Lord* of *Nature*. We ſee it therefore daily, *Death* knocks as often at the *young Man's door*, as at the *old Man's*; and as *frequently carries* the *ſtrong* and *healthful* Man *Priſoner* to the *Grave*, as the *weak* and *ſickly*.

And as there is no *Order obſerved* in *Death*, ſo is there none in the *Grave*. *Death* and the *Grave* are the two great *Levellers* of *Mankind*. While Men *live*, there is, and there ought to be *diſtinctions* among them, *God* hath *appointed* it ſo, and Men ought to *obſerve* it, *acknowledging* the *power* and *greatneſs* of thoſe that are in *high Places*: For as the *Scripture obſerves*, as there is one *Glory of the Sun*, *and another Glory of the Moon*, *and another Glory of the Stars*, *for one Star differeth from another Star in Glory*, 1 *Cor.* 15. and 41. And as there is difference in the *Celeſtial Glories*, ſo alſo is there in the *Terreſtrial*; there is a *Glory* belonging unto *Kings*, there is a *Glory* belonging unto *Noble-Men*, and a *Glory* belonging unto *Common People*; all have not, nor ought to have the ſame *Glory*, but one Man *differs* from another *Man* in *Glory*. But when *Death* comes, there is an end of all theſe *diſtinctions*; the *Grave mingles* the *Duſt* and *Bones* of the one with the other: We cannot there *diſtinguiſh* the *rich Man's Duſt*, from the *poor Man's*; nor the *Bones* of *Kings*, from thoſe of their *loweſt Subjects*. *Rich* Men indeed *deſcend* with *greater Pomp* into the *Grave*, and are *buried* in more *eminent Places*, and under more *ſtately Monuments*. But though great Men's *Tombs* differ from their *Inferiours*, yet their *Bones* do not; but the *Worms* feed upon all alike. While Men *walk* upon this *Duſt*, their *diſtances* are *many*; but when they *lie down* in the *Duſt*, they are all alike. *Civil Diffe-*

rences then *all ceaſe*, and *Moral Differences* only take *place*; and *according* as Men have *been* or *done good* or *evil* here, ſo ſhall they be *differenced* for ever hereafter.

If it be demanded now, how Man came to be *mortal*;

I *anſwer*, Not by *Creation*; for he was *created* as in a *holy*, ſo in a *deathleſs* State. *Immortality* was a part of *God's Image* at firſt imprinted upon Man. *God's Image* being *defaced* by *Sin*, *Mortality* took place. Man never had an *Impoſſibility* not to *die*, but he had a *poſſibility* not to *die*, and that was the *State* of *Man's Immortality*. In his *State* of *Innocency*, his *Life* was made as long as his *Obedience*. In God's dealing with our *firſt Parents*, he back'd his *Command* with the *threatning* of *Death*, Gen. 2. 17. *Of the Tree of knowledge of good and evil thou ſhalt not eat; for in the day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* Our *firſt Parents* diſobeyed this moſt *righteous* and *equitable Command* of *God*, and thereby brought *Death* upon themſelves and all their *Poſterity*: For though *God formed* Man, as the *Holy Story* tells us, out of the *Duſt* of the *Earth*; yet ſo long as Man *ſtood*, he never ſaid, to *Duſt* thou ſhalt *return*; but only put in a *ſuppoſition* or *threatning*, that in caſe he did *fall*, he ſhould ſurely *die*. But when by *Sin* he had *fallen* from God, then he hears what he muſt be, *Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt thou ſhalt return*. So that the *Juſtice* of *God* ſtands engaged to *inflict Death* upon every *Tranſgreſſour*. And to this the *Apoſtle* aſcribes it, *Rom.* 5. 12. *By Sin Death entered into the World, and ſo Death paſſed upon all, becauſe all have ſinned.* *Death* therefore *ſeizeth* upon us not as we are *Men*, but as we are *Sinners*. To *die*, is a *penalty inflicted* upon Man for *Sin*. If Man had not *ſinned*, he had not been

under

under a *neceſſity* of *dying*; but by *ſinning*, he became *mortal*. *Sin* therefore is not only the *Sting* of *Death*, but the *Cauſe* of *Death*: It is that which gives it not only its *Terror*, but its very *Being*; and therefore it is ſomewhat *remarkable*, that among all the *Creatures* in the World *Man* only is termed *mortal*. It is certain other *Creatures decay* and *periſh* as well as *Man*; yet among all *periſhing* things Man only hath the *wretched Denomination* of being *mortal*, and there is good *Reaſon* for it; ſince he alone of all *periſhing* things, being *created immortal*, *voluntarily* ſubjected himſelf unto *Death*, and by his own *default* brought upon himſelf the *Name* of *Mortal*, as a brand of perpetual *Infamy*.

CHAP. II.

Thoughts of Death *ought to be laid to heart by all. It is a* Christian's *great* Wisdom, *and ought to be his greatest* care *to provide for* Death. *The great* folly *and* danger *of neglecting or delaying such* Preparations *upon hopes of long life.* Sickness *a very unfit time for such a work. Men very prone to put off thoughts of* Death *and* Preparation *for it, with the* Reasons *thereof. Time* short, *though long enough for our great work, if diligently improved. Excellent Effects that the* Consideration *of our* latter end *would produce. It is a very* comfortable *thing to have all things set right between* God *and the* Soul *before a* dying hour. *Time ought therefore to be valued, and our days wisely to be numbered.*

THough the *Life* of Man be very *short*, *frail*, and *uncertain*; though *Death* hath nothing of a *peradventure* in it, but is that which will *most certainly* over-take all Men; none being able to *withstand* it, nor any *privileged* against it. Yet how strangely besotted are the generality of Men in putting far from them this *evil day*; as if because *God* hath not told them the *exact time* when they shall *die*, they were not bound to take any notice that they shall *die*? But doubtless this is as great a piece of *Folly* as most we can be guilty of: For why

dot

doth *God* so often *visit* us with *Pains* and *Distempers* upon our Bodies, which threaten *Death*? Why are we so *frequently* called to the *house of Mourning*, to accompany others unto their *long home*? Is it not that hereby we might *reflect* upon our *own Mortality* with the most *serious thoughts*, by beholding the *Death* of others? Doubtless much of a *Christian's Life* should be spent in the *thoughts of Death*, and in a right *numbring* of his *days*, so as to *log to heart* his *latter end*. It is not that where should be forced upon us by some unexpected *Providence* of *God*, in snatching some away out of the *World* by some *sudden stroke*, by the hearing whereof we are *amazed*, and by whole *Funeral* the *thoughts* of *Death* force themselves into our Minds, but we should make it the Matter of our *daily Meditation*, the thoughts of which we should *accustom* our selves unto; and that not only when with old *Barzillai* we have not long to *live*, when by *Reason* of *Age* our *Strength* is departed, when *Infirmities* and *Distempers* upon us are so many, that we can taste no sweetness in any *outward Enjoyments*; but even with *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, who made his *Sepulchre* in his *Garden* a *place* of *Pleasure*: so should we in the midst of all our *Delights* and *Recreations*, and when we are best able to *relish* what *sweetness* there is in them; even then should we *check* all such *Inclinations* in us by *accustoming* our Minds unto the *frequent*, *serious*, *awful thoughts* of our *latter end*. For this we have the *practice* of our *blessed Lord*, who when he was *transfigured* before his *Disciples*, the *Glory* whereof was so great, that St *Peter's weak Eyes* were not able to behold it; yet he then thought no *Subject* so fit to be *discoursed* of, as that of his *Death* which he was to *accomplish* at *Jerusalem*, *Luk.* 9. 31. It is therefore a *wicked Proverb* that is frequent in

the Mouths of many, *They thought not of such a thing no more than they thought of their dying Day.* Alas poor *foolish* Man, what, not think of thy *dying day*? Dost thou know what thou *sayest*? Is the *day* of thy *Death* of no more *Concernment* to thee than so? What, not so much as to *think* of it? Dost thou not know, *Oh vain, trifling Man,* that thy *dying day* will be to thee the *beginning* of a state of *Happiness* that shall never cease, or an entrance on a state of *Misery* that shall never know an end? And what, is it not worth thy bestowing a *thought* upon it? For *Shame,* O *foolish Man,* (for I scarce know how to call thee, *Christian,*) thy talk is so *profane,* and thy *Life* so *loose,* that it *savours* little of *Christianity*; to be sure not of the *power* of *Godliness,* if thy *ways* be according to thy *Words.* It is said of the *Old World,* that they *eat, they drank, they married, and were given in Marriage until the day that Noah entred into the Ark, and they knew it not, till the Flood came and swept them away.* What, was the *Old World* destroyed, because they knew not of the coming of the *Flood*? No, *Noah* was a *Preacher* of *Righteousness,* and doubtless he had told them of it many a time; but yet, it is *said,* they knew it not till the *Flood* swept them away; that is, they knew it not, so as to *consider,* and make *Provision* against the *Deluge* came; so they knew it not. So is it now with many in this *Case*; they are not *undone eternally,* by not knowing they shall *die*; for there are none how *profane* and *Atheistical* soever, but will own that they must *die*; but this *ruines* them for *ever,* that they *consider* it not so as to make timely provision for a *dying hour.*

The *Care* and *Wisdom* of a *Christian* discovers it self much by his *Preparations* for *Death.* The *Prudence* of a Man appears in nothing more than

in

in making a *good choice* for himſelf: Now there are *two Eſtates* that do abide all Men, a *State* of *Happineſs* in *Heaven*, and a *State* of *Miſery* in *Hell*; and theſe are both of them *eternal*. *Life* is the *time* of our *choice*; *Death*, which comes at the cloſe of our *days*, diſcovers what our *choice* hath been: The daily *Improving* of our *Time* in the *preparing* our *Souls* for our *Diſſolution*, is a *good Evidence* of a *wiſe* and *happy choice*. *Job complains* of ſome that *die without Wiſdom*; the *Reaſon* is, becauſe they *live* not *wiſely*, that is, they do not with *Care* and *Wiſdom prepare* themſelves for *Death*. This *Wiſdom* is wanting in moſt Men; in regard whereof we may ſay of them, as the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal 49. 20. *Man that is in honour, and underſtandeth not, is like the Beaſts that periſh*: That is, though in their *Lives* they be Men of great *Honour and Excellency*; yea, though *wiſer in their Generation*, *as our* Lord ſpeaks, *than the Children of Light*: Yet they *periſh* like a *Beaſt*; for he that *dies unpreparedly*, *dies fooliſhly*. For the *Wiſdom* of a Man *diſcovers* it ſelf much in ſerious *Meditations* of, and diligent *Preparations* for his great *Change*. This was that which *God* ſo *paſſionately* wiſh'd for his *People* of old, *Deut.* 32. 29. *Oh that my people were wiſe that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end.* And the truth of it is, it is a great piece of *Wiſdom*, and a *high attainment* in a *Chriſtian*, with *Care* and *Prudence* to *conſider* of and *prepare* for his *latter end*; yea, ſo great is it, that it is too *wonderful* to be *gained* by *Art* or *Study*, we muſt get it upon our *knees* by *Prayer*. Holy *David* therefore, as one *convinced*, both how *neceſſary* and *profitable* this *Wiſdom* would be; and being *ſenſible* alſo of his own *inability* for to *attain* it, makes it his *earneſt Prayer* unto God, that he would *inſtruct* him herein, *Pſalm* 39. 4. *Lord, make me to know mine end,*

and the measure of my days, what it is that I may know how frail I am. As if he had said, *Lord*, I have taken this and that and the other thing into my thoughts (for possibly his *mind* had been in the *dust*, and he had been *handling* the *Clay*, out of which he was taken) yet by all these *Considerations* of the *Natural Constitutions* of my *Body*, and my *Subjection* thereby unto *Death*, and the *Grave*, being a *poor feeble Creature*, I cannot bring *my Heart* to be so thoroughly *sensible* of my *frailty* as I ought: *Lord*, therefore do thou *make me to know it*. The same *Holy desire* we find breathed out, by *Moses*, in *Psalm* 90. 12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto Wisdom*: as if he had said, *Lord*, I have been at the work my self, I have *endeavoured* to *number* my *days*, to *count* over the *time* of my *life*, but by what I can do, I cannot tell how *long* or how *short* my *life* will be; it is true I can tell to *threescore* or *fourscore years*, which usually is the *longest term* of *Man's life*, and I can tell no farther, but yet for all that I cannot *apply* my heart unto *Wisdom*; this I must have from thee; therefore, *O Lord*, teach me. Though we need but little *Arithmetick* to *number* our *days Naturally*, yet we need a great deal of *Grace* to *number* them *Spiritually*. *Dying* is a *great work*, and requires *great care* and *circumspection*. We can *die* but *once*; how *careful* should we be then that we *die well*? Man had need be *very exact* in doing that which he cannot do a *second time*, and such is the work of *Dying*. An *Errour* in *Death* is like an *Errour* in *War*, which we cannot *commit twice*. O what *Reason* have we then to be careful that we do not *Err* at all, where it is impossible of *Erring* again? *Actually* to *Err twice*, is more *sinful*, but not to have a *possibility* of *Erring twice* is most *dangerous*. We *transgress* the *Laws* of *living* a

thousand

thouſand times over, but the *Laws* of *dying*, no Man ever *tranſgreſs'd a ſecond time*. And that we ſo often *tranſgreſs* the *Laws* of *Living* is an *aggravation* of *ſin* upon all Men; and that we can *tranſgreſs* the *Laws* of *Dying* but *once* is the *Seal* of *Miſery* upon moſt Men. How ſhould we then *cry* unto *God* for *Wiſdom* to make us *careful* always to *live* ſo that we may be *prepared* for a *dying hour?*

If now the *Wiſdom* of a *Chriſtian* conſiſts in making *preparations* for *Death*, then thoſe *Perſons* are *guilty* of *great folly* and run *deſperate hazards* who upon hope of *long life*, *neglect* ſuch *Preparations*. Yet if a *Miniſter* in a great *Congregation* ſhould go from Man to Man, and ask them whether they are *prepared* to *die*, would not, muſt not moſt, if they will *ſpeak* the *Truth*, be forced to ſay they are not? if upon this you deal *faithfully* with them, and ſhew your ſelves a *true Friend* to their *Souls*, laying before them, their *great folly* and *danger* herein, by ſuch *Strong* and *Powerful Convictions* that their *Conſciences* are forced to *yield* to you, and themſelves brought with *Tears* to *confeſs* their *fooliſhneſs*; hereupon what *Reſolutions* do they take up, and what *Promiſes* do they make, binding their *Souls* to *God* by many *Vows*, witneſſed with many *Prayers* and *Tears*, that they will make it the buſineſs of their *Lives* for the time to come; to *prepare* for *Death*: but alas, how ſoon do theſe ſeemingly *ſtrong Reſolutions die* and come to nothing? and *Death* that under thoſe *Convictions* they feared was *ready* to *ſeize* upon them every *moment*, is now as far from their *Perſons* they *hope*, as he is from their *thoughts*. He *threatens* them not as formerly, and therefore they *fear* him not as formerly. *Diſtempers* of Body which ſometimes *frighted* them into an *awe* and *fear* of *Death* are now *departed* from them, and ſo is *Death* with them, at leaſt as

to their *Apprehenſions*. They have now a *Healthful ſtrong Conſtitution* of *Body*, and what doth this *Prognoſticate* but *long Life* and many *dayes* yet to come they hope? Doth not the *Word* of *God* ſay that the *Age* of *Man* is *Threeſcore years* and *Ten*, and many times by *Reaſon* of *Strength*, which they feel no want of, it is *Fourſcore*; and for their parts they have not *lived above Thirty* or *forty years* as yet, and therefore ſurely they have a great deal of *time* ſtill to come, and then they will *bethink* themſelves of *dying*, and that will be *time* enough. But *O fooliſh Man*, what *vain confidence* is this in which thou *truſteſt*; who gave thee this *Knowledge* of thy *Life* and *Time*, that thou art thus *ſtrangely bold* and *preſumptuous* as if thou hadſt the *Leaſe* thereof in thine *own hands*, and at thine *own diſpoſe*. Indeed we read of good *Hezekiah*, that upon his recovery from a fit of *Sickneſs*, God gave him a *Leaſe* of his *Life* for *fifteen years*, but who ever had the like. *Scripture* and *Experience*, ſpeak of nothing more plainly than the *Frailty* and *uncertainty* of *Man's Life*. It is therefore compared to the *Wind*, to a *Leaf*, to a *Flower*, to a *Shadow*, to a *Vapour*; by all which the *Spirit* of *God* ſets forth to us, the *Frailty*, *Brevity* and *uncertainty* of *Man's Life* endeavouring hereby to take us off from all fooliſh *conceits* and vain *hopes* of *long life*; for what is our *Life*, but a *Vapour that appeareth for a while and then vaniſheth away*? a little *breath* turned in and out by the *Noſtrils*, a *narrow paſſage* that is ſoon *ſtopt* and we are gone. We have no *Aſſurance* of our *Life*, no not for a *moment*, *Death* lies in *Ambuſh* every where for us. We have a *Proverb*, that *the young Man may die*, but *the old Man muſt die*; whereas *Obſervation* will *inform* us, that *incomparably* more *die young than old*. And did we but ſeriouſly conſider, by what ſmall pins this

this *Frame* of Man is held together, it would appear no leſs than a *Miracle*, that we *live* one *day* or *hour* to an end, ſo many *dangers*, ſo many *Caſualties* do we paſs through every *moment*: and are the thoughts of *Death* and thy *preparation* for *Death* and that *Eternity* that follows it, to be put off to ſuch *uncertainties*. Are not all thy *days* on *Earth few*, and thou haſt ſpent ſome of them already, and poſſibly thoſe *few days* of thine that are already *paſt* and *gone*, are all the *days* thou haſt to *paſs*: ſay not then to *God*, to thy *Conſcience*, or to *others* that put thee upon a *preſent preparation* for *Death* and *Eternity*, I will do it *to morrow*, or *hereafter*; *boaſt* not thy ſelf, O *vain Man, of to morrow, for thou knoweſt not even what this day may bring forth to thee*; poſſibly *this day* may bring forth *thy death*, and where then will be thy *to morrows preparation for it?*

But ſuppoſe *Death* ſhould not cut us off *ſuddenly*, but give us *warning* of its *approach* by *Sickneſs* and *Diſtempers* of *Body*; yet how *unfit* a *time* is that to *prepare* for *dying*? for *Diſeaſes* ſometimes come with that *Violence*, that they *quickly* take away Mens *Senſes* and *Underſtandings*, and having *loſt* the uſe of their *Reaſon* they are fit for nothing. And haſt thou, O *preſumptuous ſinner*, that truſteſt to a *Sick-bed preparation for Death and Eternity*, any *Aſſurance*, that this ſhall not be thy *State* and *Condition* then; nay, thou haſt juſt *cauſe* to *fear* that thus it ſhall be, becauſe in the *time* of thy *Health* and *Strength* when *God* called after thee to look towards *himſelf*, and to *mind* thy *Everlaſting Concernments*, thou wou'dſt not: therefore now that thou art come to lie upon a *Death-bed*, and thy *Conſcience* is awakened with *horrour*, becauſe of thy former *negligence*, and the *proſpect* of thy *future Miſery*; that now the *Violence* of thy *Diſtempers* ſhould

ſhould be ſo great, as to *render* thee *uncapable* of ſuch a *Work*. Or if *God* ſhould be ſo *merciful* to thee, (which thou haſt no reaſon to expect) as to *continue* to thee the uſe of thy *Reaſon* and *Underſtanding*, ſo that being apprehenſive of the *approach* of *Death*, and *Conſcience* alſo be *awakened* and *terrifying* thee with the *fears* of a *ſtrict account*, that thou art going to give unto the Great God *of all that thou haſt done in the Body, whether it be good or evil*; dreading alſo what the *Conſequences* thereof may be; by reaſon of thy *negligence* and *careleſſneſs* in the time of thy *Health* and *Strength*, to make preparation for thy *Eternal State*. It being thus with thee, and thine *Eyes* being *opened* to ſee whither thou art going, thou art very *deſirous* it may be now to *ſet* thy *Soul* in *order*, becauſe thou *feareſt* thou *ſhalt die*, and *not live*. Yet thy *Sickneſs* may be ſo *ſharp*, and *pains* may come upon thee with that *Extremity*, that all thou canſt do will be little enough to *mind* thy *Body*. God may *viſit* thee with ſuch *ſtrong pains* upon thy *bed*, as may make thee *cry* and *roar* with ſuch *horrours*, as may make thee a *terror* to thy *ſelf* and to all that come near thee; ſo that all thou canſt do for thy *ſelf*, or what *others* can do for thee, may not be able to give thee any *eaſe*, or *relief*. And is this the *time* thou *chooſeſt* to *prepare thy ſelf* for *Death* and *Eternity* in? What, when thou canſt *hardly* tell how to *turn* thy *Body* upon thy *Bed*, for a little *eaſe*? Doſt thou think this a *fit time* to *turn* thy *Soul* fron *Sin* unto *God* in? Suppoſe thou wert now caſt upon a *Sick-bed*, and thy *Body* full of *pains*, if any one ſhould come and put thee in mind of ſome *Worldly Buſineſs*, wouldſt thou not think it a *good excuſe*, to ſay, Pray *trouble* me not now, becauſe I am *Sick*; Speak to me of theſe things when I am *Well* again? And doſt thou think it *Reaſonable* to

be

be *excuſed* from *Worldly Buſineſs*, becauſe thou art *Sick*; and yet doſt thou Judge it the *beſt time* for thee to be employed about thy *Spiritual concerns* when thou art *ſick*, yea when thou art *dying*? Surely *deſperate folly* and *madneſs* is in the *hearts* of theſe Men, who thus *live*, and thus think to *die*. Alas, the *time* of *Sickneſs* is a time of *ſpending* not of *getting*; it is not a *time* to *gain Evidences* for *Heaven*, but to *uſe* them, and to take the *comfort* that *flows* from them. Alas poor Man, thou ſhouldſt now be *ſolacing* thy *Soul* in *God* as thy *Father reconciled* to thee in *Chriſt*; and having made it the buſineſs of thy *life* to *ſerve* and *pleaſe* him *ſincerely*, though not without weakneſſes and imperfections; thou *ſhouldſt* now be able to *ſay*, thou haſt through *Jeſus Chriſt* received the *Atonement*, and art continually *rejoycing* in *hopes* of the *Glory* of *God*; the *comfort* whereof ſhould be ſo *great*, as to *ſwallow* up all thy *Bodily pains* and *diſtempers*, and carry thee *chearfully* through the *Pangs* of *Death*; ſo as that thou ſhouldſt be able to ſay, *Bleſſed be God I am not ſick, for mine Iniquities are forgiven me.* This ſhould be thy *State* and *Condition* upon a *dying bed*. But if thou haſt thy *work* to do, thy *Preparations* for *Heaven* and *Eternity* to make when thou art upon thy *Sick*, yea thy *Death-Bed*, Oh how *miſerable*, I had almoſt ſaid, how *deſperate* is thy *Caſe!* How many *Gracious Souls* have found it *work* enough upon a *Death-bed* to *attend* the *Pains* and *Diſtempers* of their *Bodies*? and believe it, O *Sinner*, who ever thou art, thou wilt find it a *great truth*, that to *ſuffer* and be *ſick* is work enough for any Man at *one time*.

But *ſuppoſe God* ſhould be ſo *Gracious* to thee, as by ſome *lingering* and *gentle ſickneſs* for many *days*, yea *months* together, give thee warning of thy *approaching Diſſolution*; and thy *Conſcience* alſo

alſo ſhould be *awakened* to ſtir up in thee ſome *ſerious thoughts* and *endeavours* to *prepare* thy *ſelf* for thy *departure* hence; yet ſince thou haſt ſo often *turned* thy *back* upon *God*, and *refuſed* to *hearken* unto thoſe many *Calls* that he hath vouchſafed unto thee in the *time* of thy *life*, to be *Wiſe* for thy *ſelf* by *conſidering* thy *latter end*, but thou wouldſt not; how juſtly may he now *reject* thee at the *time* of thy *death*, though thou *follow'ſt* him with never ſo many *earneſt cries*, yea and *Tears* alſo? That is a moſt dreadful place of *Scripture*, *Oh* that it were *Engraven* with a *Pen* of *Iron*, and with the *Point* of a *Diamond*, upon the *heart* of every *careleſs negligent ſinner*! *Proverbs* 1. from 24. to 31. *Becauſe I have called and you have refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand, and no Man regarded. But you have ſet at nought all my Counſel, and would none of my reproof.* What then O dreadful, O Soul confounding words! *I alſo will laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh. When your fear cometh as Deſolation, and your Deſtruction as a Whirlwind. When Diſtreſs and Anguiſh cometh upon you.* Well, but what follows upon this? will not *God* be *Entreated*? cannot *Prayers* and *Cries* do any thing with *God*? No, for it follows in the next words; *Then ſhall they call upon me, but I will not Anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me; for they hated Knowledge, and did not chooſe the fear of the Lord: They would none of my Counſel, they deſpiſed all my Reproof.* What's the Concluſion of all this? why, that we have in the next words, *therefore ſhall they eat the Fruit of their own ways, and be filled with their own Devices.* Whoever thou art that *Readeſt* theſe *Lines*, if through thy *careleſſneſs* this ſhould ever come to be thy *Caſe*, becauſe thou wilt not take warning, I have only this *doleful*

word

Word to leave with thee for thy *ſerious thoughts* and *meditations*, and from my *Soul* I wiſh it may do thy *Soul* good; this *State*, that I am *ſpeaking* of, will be a *State* ſo *full* of *diſmal anguiſh*, and *perplexing horrours*, that no *words* are able to *expreſs* the *miſery* of it.

Moreover, a *ſick-bed Repentance*, and *Preparation* for thy *Eternal State* is very *queſtionable*. How hard a matter wilt thou find it then to ſatisfie thy own *Conſcience*, or to convince others, that what thou now doſt is done in the uprightneſs of thy Heart, and not in Hypocriſie? Alas the preſent feeling of the *wrath* of *God*, and the future expectations of *fiery indignation* in *Hell*, may conſtrain thee unto all that thou doſt. It was a very ſad *Relation*, (and I wiſh the reading of it may do ſome Soul good) which once I received from the Mouth of an eminent *Godly Miniſter*, of many years ſtanding in the *Miniſtry*: I have, ſays he, been called to viſit abundance of *Perſons* upon their *Death-beds*, who reflecting back upon the *wickedneſs* of their *lives*, have profeſſed a great deal of *grief and ſorrow*, and made many *Promiſes* what they would do, and how they would *live*, if *God* would reſtore them to their *health* again; but among them all, ſays he, thus dying, I could never yet meet with one that could give me *good ground* to believe the *Happineſs* of their *future ſtate* and *condition* in another *World*. O let the conſideration hereof cut thee to the Heart, O thou ſlothful and delaying Sinner.

But if thou ſhouldſt be *ſincere* then in thy *turning* unto *God*, and thy *Preparations* for *Death* and *Eternity*, ſuch as are found and not *hypocritical* and *feigned*; and *God* ſhould be *graciouſly entreated* of thee in this laſt and greateſt *hour* of thy *diſtreſs*; yet

will

will it not *wound* and *pierce* thy *Soul* to consider what *Peace* of *Conscience*, what *joy* in *believing*, what *comfortable testimonies* of *God's loving kindness* to thy *Soul* thou hast lost; the *sweetness* and *delight* whereof would have born up thy *Soul* in a *dying hour*, and have carried thee *triumphantly* through the *gloomy valley* of the *shadow* of *Death*, so that thou shouldst have feared no evil. But now instead thereof, by reflecting upon the former course of thy *life*, which hath been a *continual trade* of *Sin* and *Wickedness*, whereby *God* hath been *dishonoured* and *provoked* by thee all thy days, he now *appears* to thee as thy dreadful *Enemy*, visiting thee with nothing but *terrible Rebukes* of *horrour* and *wrath* in thy *Conscience*: And though *God* may have *mercy* upon thy *Soul eternally*, and the *state* of thy *future Happiness* may be sure and certain in it self; yet thy *passage* to it may be very *uncomfortable*; insomuch that as to thy *sense* and *feeling* thou art but leaving *Earth* to go to *Hell*, *God's bringing* thee to *Heaven* being by the *Gates* thereof.

But though *delays* in this *case* are *dangerous*, and *sick-bed preparations* for *Heaven* and *Eternity* at best, but *uncomfortable*; yet how *prone* are most Men to *put off* the thoughts of *Death* and their *Preparations* for it? *Solomon* tells us, *Eccles. 7. That it is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to the House of Feasting, for this is the end of all Men, and the living will lay it to Heart.* We ought indeed daily to *familiarize Death* to our *Souls*, by *frequent thoughts* and *meditations* of it; but when we go to the *House* of *Mourning*, to see any laid in the *Grave*, this is a *special proper time and season for the living to lay Death to Heart*; and it is probable if Men will at any time lay *Death* to *Heart*, surely they will do it at *such a time* as that is; for when will Men think

think of *Death*, if not when they ſee it before them? It is true, ſome do lay *Death* to *Heart*, when they are called to ſuch *Solemnities*: O then they have a *fit of grief* upon them; but as ſoon as they have *vented* their *Paſſion*, the *fit* is over, and ſo is their thoughts of *Death* with it. And though *Solomon* ſeems to *promiſe* for the *living*, that in the *Houſe* of *Mourning* they will lay it to *Heart*; yet there are very many, that have been ſo often there, that they are *grown familiar with Death*; but in a *bad ſence*; for the *frequency* of ſuch *occaſions*, have *worn* off all *impreſſions* of *Mortality* from their *Hearts*; ſo that now they can go to the *Grave* again and again, and not be *affected* with it; they look upon it as a matter of *Cuſtom* and *Formality* for *Men* to *die* and be *buried*, and when the *ſolemnity* of the *Funeral* is over, the *thoughts* of *Death* are over with them; and as ſoon as they can get out of the *ſight* of the *Grave*, their *Preparations* for the *Grave* are out of their *Mind*. The *Holy Hiſtory* tells us, in 2 *Sam.* 10. 12. that *when* Amaſa *was ſlain by* Joab, *and lay wallowing in his Blood in the midſt of the high way, every one that came by ſtood ſtill, being aſtoniſhed to behold ſo diſmal a Spectacle*: But afterwards we read, that *Amaſa was removed out of the High-way into the Field, and a Cloth caſt upon him*: And what then? why, the *Holy Text* tells us, *All the People went on after Joab.* So is it with us, if we behold a *Perſon lying* upon a *death-bed*, *gaſping* and *bleeding*, and with *dying groans* ready to *expire* his *laſt breath*; here we make a *ſtop*, and *pauſe* with ſome *aſtoniſhment* at ſo ſad a *ſight*; but let a *Cloth* be thrown over the *Dead*, and the *Corps drawn aſide into the Grave*, and covered with *Earth*; preſently we go to our *employments* and *trading*, and *poſſibly* ſome to their *ſinful Practices* again; as if the *laſt Man* that ſhould *die* were now *buried*.

Now

Now the *Reasons* of this *stupidity* and *carelessness* may be such as these.

First, *The great Love and Affection Men have to the World, and the things thereof.* These take up all the *thoughts* and *time* of some Men, so that they have no *leasure* nor *desires* to *think* of *Death*, or to make *Preparations* for another *Life*. The *Pleasures*, *Honours*, and *Profits* of the *World* are *fine things* in *their Eyes*, they *please* their *Fancies*, and so *possess* their *Minds* with a *fond desire* of *long Life*, that they may *delight* their *senses* in these *earthly things*, and these *ardent*, *earnest desires* of theirs will let them think of nothing less than *many days* to *satisfie* their *sensual part* in these *delightful enjoyments*. If we should look *abroad* into the *World*, we may easily *perceive* which way the *Inclinations* of most *Men* carry them; How *eagerly* do some *pursue* the *Pleasures* of the *World*? How *unweariedly* do others follow the *Profits* of the *World*? And how *impatiently* do others *thirst* after the *Honours* and *Preferments of the World*, as if their *Happiness* were wrapp'd up in these *outward Accommodations*? Whereas our *Lord* tells us, that *a Man's Life consists not in the abundance of the things that he enjoys here in this World.* And by these *things* the *thoughts* of *Death* are not suffered to come into *Men's Minds*; and if they will crowd in upon them sometimes, they are soon cast out again as unwelcome Guests, that come to disturb their Peace.

Secondly, *Men put off the thoughts of* Death *and Preparation for it, because they generally look upon it as that which is afar off*: And this is the *greatest sottishness* in the *World*. If you go to those that are *young*,

young, and tell them that they muſt *die*; it is true, ſay they, and *Old Men* ought to *conſider* it, and *prepare* themſelves for it; but ſurely for us there is no ſuch haſt yet. Alas, they think they muſt of right and courſe live till they are *Aged*. If you go to *Old Men*, and tell them that they muſt *die*; alas, their *Age* tells them ſo, they cannot *deny* it; but though *God* viſit them with *weakneſs* and *infirmities*, the *Companions* of *Old Age*, which *impair* their *Health*, and *waſte* their *ſtrength* continually; yet they *Hope* theſe *decays* are not ſo *great*, nor ſo *violent*, but that they may yet *weather* out a *few years more*; thoſe that are *healthful* and *ſtrong* think they need not *prepare* for *Death*, till they have *warning* given them of its *approach* by *Sickneſs*: And thoſe that *God* doth *ſummon* to the *Grave* by *Sickneſs* and *Diſeaſes*, they have a *ſecret hope*, that becauſe they have formerly *eſcaped* from other *diſtempers*, therefore they may do ſo again. Thus now moſt Men *thruſt Death* from them, and put the *evil Day afar off*. And it is a *true ſaying*, that uſually the *hopes* of a *long life*, is the *cauſe* of an *evil life*; for becauſe Men *hope* they ſhall *live long*, therefore they are *careleſs* how *they live* at preſent, preſuming they may have *time* enough to *repent* and *amend* all hereafter.

Thirdly, *Men put off the thoughts of Death, becauſe ſuch apprehenſions bring a great deal of Fear and Terrour with them.* *Death* is that which *Nature* abhors to think of; it cannot *endure* the *thoughts of Separation*, between thoſe *near* and *dear Companions* of *Soul* and *Body*. Oh to think that this *Body*, that is here pamper'd and made ſo much of, ſhould become *vile* and *loathſome* in the *Grave*, laid in a *Bed* of *ſtench* and *rottenes*, covered with *Worms*, mouldring away into the *duſt* of *Oblivion*! This is a *ſad* and *melancholy ſubject* for our *thoughts* to *muſe* upon;

on; O this *King of Terrours*, *Death*! How *unwe-*
come is he unto the *thoughts* of most men; espe-
cially *considering* him as having his *sting* in him,
which is *Sin*: O then it is no wonder that those who
are *Conscious* to themselves of *condemning guilt*
dare not think of *standing* before the *dreadful Tri-*
bunal of God, whither *Death*, *God's Serjeant*, will
bring them; but cry out with *Horrour*, *Who a-*
mong us can dwell with devouring Fire! *Who a-*
mong us can dwell with everlasting Burning! O
it is no *wonder* that such put far from them the
thoughts of Death, because they know that *day*
whensoever it comes, will be to them an *evil day*.

But if Men would seriously consider, how short
their time in this *World* is, the *hazard* and *danger*
they run by their *delays* would be prevented. Surely
they that have a *lively sense* of the *things of E-*
ternity upon their *Hearts*, that know their time here
to be but *short*; and believe that upon the *improve-*
ment of this *short time*, their *misery* or *happiness* for
Eternity doth depend, will not be so foolish as to
put off their *Preparations* for *Death* and *Eternity*
till hereafter, when they have no *assurance* of their
lives, no not for a *moment*. This is so *weighty a*
consideration that if it were laid to *Heart*, would
prevail with all Men that have the right use of their
Reason and *Understanding*: Our *time* in this *World*
is *short* and *uncertain*, yet is our *work* very *great*.
We are but of *yesterday*, and *possibly* before to *Mor-*
row we may not be, and the *Great God* hath *sus-*
pended Eternity upon the *improvement* of this *mo-*
ment; a few *days*, or a few *hours*, nay possibly a
few *minutes*, will *determine* our *everlasting State*
and *condition*; and according as we are in spending
of them; so shall our *Doom* be either to *Eternal*
Happiness, or to *Eternal Misery*; and why, Oh why
should

ſhould our *precious* and *immortal Souls* be ſo *vile* in our *Eyes*, as to *loſe* them by *ſloth* and *careleſsneſs*? Why ſhould any of us be ſuch *Fools* and *Mad-men*, to hearken to the *ſollicitations* of the *Fleſh*, or to the *allurements* of a *flattering deceitful World*, ſo as to put off and neglect our *everlaſting concerns*? Should we not rather ſay to the *World*, or whatever it be that would hinder us in our *great work*; Stand off, for we are *working for Eternity*, an *Eternity* that is but a few days, it may be but a few *hours* hence; a *boundleſs*, a *bottomleſs*, *endleſs ſtate* and *condition*, into which we know not how ſoon we may be *caſt*; and therefore we have no *time* to dally in, or to *trifle* away.

But though our *Time* be *ſhort*, yet is it *long enough* for our *great Work*, if *diligently improved*. We have ſo much *time* allotted us, as will ſerve to do our *real buſineſs* in, and to anſwer the *ends* of *living*. A *Chriſtian's Work* in this World, is not to *incumber* himſelf with many things; or to vex himſelf about the *accompliſhing* of *great deſigns* for the *World*, to get a great *Eſtate*, to *abound* with *Pleaſures*, to grow *great* in the *eſteem* of Men; theſe things are as much *below* a *Chriſtian's Work*, as they are *below his Reward*: And whoever thou art that *deſigneſt* theſe things for thy ſelf, thou maiſt not have *time enough* for the *attaining* of them; but yet *Heaven* may be got in that *time* that the *World cannot*; thy *Salvation* may be *wrought out*, *God* may be made *propitious* to thee through *Chriſt*, the *one thing needful*, the *better* part that ſhall never be taken away from thee; theſe may be *obtained* by thee, and *ſecured* to thee as thy *Portion*, in that *time* that *God* hath given thee, if thou art *diligent* in *improving* of it: Do not *ſigh* and *mourn* therefore that thou canſt *number* no more *days*; do not *murmur*

and

and *complain* at the *ſhortneſs* of thy *Life*: What wouldſt thou do if thy *days* were more? What *uſe* wouldſt thou make of thy *time*, if it were *longer*? Is it that thou mighteſt *ſave* thy Soul, and make thy *Peace* with *God*, that thou deſireſt more *time*? Why thou needeſt not more *time* for theſe *purpoſes* than *God* hath *allotted* thee already; thy *Life* is long enough if thou didſt *uſe* it *aright*. It is not a *little time* that we have; but it is a little that we *uſe*: *God* hath not given us *a little*, but we *throw* away *much*. Our *Portion* is not *ſmall*; for what we are to *Trade*, but our *miſpence* is exceeding great. *God* is not *niggardly* and *ſparing* in what he hath given us; but we are *prodigal* and *profuſe* *fooliſhly waſting* away our *hours*; they that have *abundance* of *time* given them, through their *Imprudence* and *Miſpence* are utterly *undone*; and then they whine like *Beggars*, as if they had had no *time*; whereas thoſe that have *leſs* time than others, that make theſe *Complaints*, have ſo improved that *little*, that, *Thanks* be to *God*, they are *rich* in *good Works*, and ſay it is *enough*, let *God* call for them when he *pleaſeth*.

If now upon the *ſerious Conſideration* of the *ſhortneſs* of *time*, any ſhall be *ſtirred* up and *provoked* to a *diligent Improvement* of it, ſo as to *prepare* themſelves for their *latter end*, they ſhall find ſuch *Benefits* as theſe redounding to their *Souls* thereby.

Firſt, It will be a great means for the Prevention of much Sin. He that ſhall ſeriouſly *conſider* with himſelf, *I muſt ſhortly die*, how ſoon I know not, will preſently *reflect* upon himſelf under a *Temptation* to *Sin*, and ſay, Why ſhould I *commit* this or that *Evil*, which if it be not a means to *haſten* my *end*, yet will *certainly* make it more *uneaſie* and *uncomfortable*, when I come to *lie* upon a *Death-*

Death-bed, and conſider what I have done *amiſs*: Poſſibly I may *die* to *morrow*; for *who knows what a day may bring forth*? O why then ſhall *I venture* to *commit* that *evil* to *day*, which will be as *Gall* and *Wormwood*, and like *Bitterneſs* and *Vexation* to my *Soul* then! Would I do it did I *believe* that I were to *die* to *morrow*? Why ſhould I then do it to *day*, that know not whether I ſhall *live* till to *morrow*; for it is *poſſible* this may prove the *laſt day* of my Life?

Secondly, *He that ſhall ſeriouſly conſider his latter end, and ſhall diligently employ himſelf and his time accordingly, ſhall find his life moſt comfortable and contentful, and his Death moſt eaſie and peaceable.* As for the *Contentment* of Life; if you look abroad among Men in regard of their outward *Eſtate* and Condition, you ſhall find that that Man, who by his *Induſtry* hath *got* to be *aforehand* in the *World*, hath much more *Peace* and *Quietneſs* in his *Life*, than he that is *behind-hand* or *gone back*, and is *continually ſtruggling* with *Neceſſities* and *Wants*. So is it in *Spirituals* alſo; he that hath been *wiſe* in *improving* the *Opportunities* that *God* hath *vouchſafed* him for the getting of *Grace*, and making his *Peace* with *God* through *Chriſt*; he that hath done thus, a *great part*, yea a *chief part* of the *buſineſs* of his *Life* is *done*; he is *prepared* in *ſome meaſure* for all *Conditions* the *wiſe Providence* of *God* may *diſpenſe* to him, be it *Sickneſs* or *Health*; be it *Life* or *Death*; for he is *aforehand*, as it were, in the *buſineſs* of his *everlaſting Concerns*; ſo that if God *lengthen* out his *Life* in this world, he carries on his *great work* and *buſineſs* unto greater *degrees* of *Perfection*, not only without *Trouble* and *Diſturbance*, but with great *Eaſe* and *Pleaſure*: Or if *God* ſee good to *cut ſhort* his *days*, and call him to give an *Account* of his *Talents*,

lents, his great *business* is not now to go about, but his *Accounts* are ready, and he in *some measure prepared* to *give* them up unto his *Lord* and *Master*; and, *O blessed is that Servant whom his Master when he comes shall find so doing.*

But this is not all, the *frequent considering* our *latter end* brings *Ease* and *Peace* in *Death*; it abates, if not *removes* the *fears* of it. *Death* in *Scripture* is called the *King* of *Terrors*, and many times the *fear* of *Death* is more *terrible* than *Death* it self: Now that which makes *Death* thus *terrible* to us, is the *knowledge* of our *Guilt*, and the *Apprehensions* of God's *Wrath* and *Displeasure* justly *deserved* thereby; this *gives Death* its *Sting* and *Terror*. Now he that makes it his *business* to *live* in *constant Preparation* for *Death*, by *Acts* of *Repentance* for former Sins, and by *frequent Applications* of the *Blood* of *Christ* to his *Soul* by *Faith*, he removes both the *Sting* and the *Fear* of *Death* at once: For how can he be *afraid* of *Death*, whose *frequent Thoughts* and *Meditations* of it make it *familiar* to him: And as for the *Sting* of *Death*, that cannot hurt him neither; for where *Sin* is truly *repented* of, it is *really pardoned*; and *Sin* being *pardoned*, the *Power* and *Sting* of it, whereby it *hurts* and *wounds others*, is taken away as to him; so that though *others* are *held* in *Bondage* under the *fear* of *Death* all their lives, and feel the *deadly Sting* of it when they come to *die*; yet he *fears* not either the *suddenness* of its *Approach*, nor the *power* of its *Sting*.

Now *dying* being a *work* of great *weight* and *difficulty*, it is not only of *great Concernment*, but it will be full of *Sweetness* and *Comfort* to us when we come to lie upon our *death-bed*, to be able to say, that *all things* are set *straight* and *right* between *God* and our *Souls*: Such *Persons* are no small *Proficients* in *Grace* and *Holiness*, but are *strong in the*

CHAP. III.

The State of Man considered under Death. What it is to wait for Death, with Reasons why we must prepare for it. Dying is an important, difficult Work. Death continually hastning towards us, yet few consider how suddenly themselves or others may Die. Death comes violently to Wicked Men, yet no Man dies before his time; however in Scripture some are said so to do. An Exhortation to prepare for Death, with Motives to quicken Christians thereunto, and Directions to help them therein.

HAving spoken something of the *Life* of *Man*, as it hath *Relation* unto the *Subject* I am speaking to, which by *Reason* of *Sin* is become *short*, *frail*, and *uncertain*; I shall now *consider* the *State* of *Man* under *Death*, which is the end of his *Temporal*, but the *beginning* and *entrance* upon his *Everlasting State*; which that *Christians* may with the more *profit* and *advantage meditate* upon, I shall *reduce* all that I have to say of it unto *three particulars*. The *State* of *Man* under *Death* is a *State* that *admits* of no *returning* unto *Life*; a *State* that *admits* of no *amendments*; and a *State* that is *fixed* and *determined*.

First, The *State of Man under Death is a State that admits of no returning unto Life again.* When once the *Sun* of this *Life* is set, it will *arise* no more upon thee for *ever*. *Are not my Days few*, says *Job*

Ceaſe from me, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I ſhall not return. And *Job* 10.20. *When a few Days are come,* ſays he, *I ſhall go whence I ſhall not return, Job* 16.22. That's a *ſtrange Journey* indeed that admits of no return. That which *pleaſeth* us while we live, is the *hopes* of *returning* to our *Homes* again; but when we *die*, we take a *Journey* whence there is no *returning*; for there is no *recovery* out of the *Grave*, when once we are *Dead*. Indeed it is a *fundamental Article* of the *Chriſtian Faith*, to *believe* the *Reſurrection* of the *Dead*; for the *Scripture* tells us, that *all Men ſhall ſtand before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, to receive according to what they have done in the Body*: Now if there be not a *Reſurrection* of the *Dead*, how can this be? therefore our *Lord* tells us plainly, *John* 5. 28. that *the hour is coming when all that are in their Graves ſhall hear his Voice and ſhall come forth*; but this *time* is not yet *come*, and till this *time comes*, the *ſentence* of *Death* is *irreverſible* upon all. And though God hath already *ſtretched* forth his *hand* to the *Grave*, for the *raiſing* of *ſome Perſons* from the *Dead miraculouſly*; yet, as thoſe *few* that have *eſcaped Death*, make no *breach* upon this *general Truth*, that all muſt *Die*; ſo it doth not at all infringe this *general Truth*, that *God* will not now by the *manifeſtation* of the ſame *miraculous Power*, *raiſe* any from the *Grave*, becauſe ſome have been *raiſed* and *recovered* out of it.

Secondly, *The State of Man under Death admits of no amendments or alterations. Life* is the *Time* of *Working*, in *Death* we *receive* the *Reward* of our *Work*. Our *Lord* tells us of himſelf, *I muſt Work the Works of him that ſent me, while it is Day, for the Night comes wherein no Man can Work*, *Joh.* 9. 4. *Death* puts an *end* to all *Work*, whether

whether they be *Natural*, *Civil*, or *Religious*. There is no *eating* or *drinking*, nor any *pleaſure* to be taken in any *outward enjoyments* in the *State* of *Death*: there is no *buying*, or *ſelling*, or *getting gain* when we are *Dead*; nay, *Death* puts an *end* to all *Spiritual Works*; thoſe *Duties* that upon *Earth* were the *Saints exerciſe*, in the *Grave* there is an *end* of them; there is a *dying* and *periſhing* for *ever*, in *reſpect* of *Faith* and *Repentance*, in *reſpect* of *praying* and *hearing* the *Word*, theſe are *Heavenly Works*; but the *Time* for the *performance* of them is while we are here upon *Earth*. None of theſe *Labours* are in *Heaven* or in *Hell*, no nor in the *Grave*, whither we are all going. In *Heaven* there is *nothing* but *reſt*; in *Hell* though there be no *reſt*, yet there is no *labour*: In *Hell* there is *nothing* but *Wages*, in *Heaven* there is *nothing* but *Reward*; our whole *Work* lies in the *few Days* that are on this *ſide* both. What we do for the *obtaining* of *Heaven*, or for the *avoiding* of *Hell*, it muſt be *done* now, for there is no *Work*, no *Device* in the *Grave*, *whither we are all going*.

Thirdly, *The State of Man under Death is a State that is fixed and determined.* He that *dies* under the *Guilt* of *Sin* ſhall never have it *forgiven* him, The *Blood* of *Chriſt* that was *appointed* for the *Pardon* of *Sin*, and for the *Juſtification* of a *Sinner*, ſhall never make God *propitious* to a *Soul* that *dies* under the *Guilt* of *Sin*; though that *Blood* now *ſpeaks better things than the Blood of* Abel; and *crying* aloud to *Heaven*, nay in *Heaven*, for *Mercy*, hath *obtained Pardon* and *forgiveneſs* for *thouſands* of *Soüls* now in *Glory*; yet hath it no *virtue* in it that ſhall be *applicable* to any *Sinner* for the *remiſſion* of his *Sins*, when once the *Sentence* of *Death* is *executed* upon him. There is a *Sacrifice* appointed

by *God*, to *take away* Sin in *this Life*, even the *Blood* of *Chriſt* that *cleanſeth from all Sin*; and now he *intreats* and *beſeecheth Sinners* to come unto him, that they may have *Life* by him: but thoſe that will not now *accept* of his *Gracious offer*, but *continue* in *Sin*, and *Diſobedience* all their *days*, and *die* under the *Guilt* thereof; there *remains* no more *Sacrifice* for them, and it is *impoſſible* they ſhould ever be *Pardoned*, becauſe the *Sufferings* of *Chriſt* were never *Ordained* as an *Expiatory Sacrifice* for *their Sins*. His *bleeding* and *dying* upon the *Croſs* will do them no *good* at all now; the *Time* and *Seaſon* of *Mercy* and *Grace* with them is *gone* and *paſt* for *ever*. Nay, let me add a dreadful word unto all ſuch, *inſtead* of any *Benefit* and *Advantage* that will come to them by the *Blood* of *Chriſt*, it is that *which cries loudly* againſt *them* for the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of *God* to fall upon them to *Eternity*. Beſides, he that *dies* under the *guilt* of *Sin*, *dies* alſo under the *filth* and *pollution* of *Sin*, from whence he ſhall *never* be *cleanſed*. We *read* in *Scripture* of a *Refiner's Fire*; but *Hell Fire* is not of this *Nature*, it *enrageth* the *Sinner*, but it doth not *Refine* him. No, that *Sin* or *Holineſs* that *accompanies* Men out of this *World*, ſhall *abide* with them for *ever*; he that *dies* in a *State* of *Sin*, his *guilt* remains upon him for *ever*: there are no *Seaſons* of *Grace* to be *enjoyed* in another *World*, nor are there any Operations of the *Spirit* of *God*, *vouchſafed* to *Renew* and *Change* Men hereafter. Whilſt we are in this *World*, though the *Law Condemns* us for our *ſin* and *guilt*, and the *Goſpel diſowns* us for our *filth* and *pollution*; yet even *ſuch* as we have *been Waſhed*, have been *Juſtified*, have *been Sanctified*; and ſo may we, for the *Blood* of *Chriſt* is ſtill a *Fountain* open to *waſh* in for *Sin* and for *uncleanneſs*; and the *Infinite* though *Provoked Ma-*

jeſty

jesty of *Heaven condescends* so *low* as to *entreat* us with more *Earnestness* and *Affection* to *pity* our own *Souls* and *accept* of a *Pardon*, then *Guilty Condemned Sinners* desire to *obtain* it: but when this *Life* is at an *end*, there shall be no *more Offers* of *Mercy*, but the *Blood* of *Christ*, shall then be a *Spring shut up*, and a *Fountain Sealed* that none can *wash* in it and be *Cleansed*. *Death Seals* up the *State* of a *Sinner* for *ever*. You know what *Abraham* tells the *Rich Man* in *Hell*, in *Luke* 16. 26. *Between us and you* says he, *there is a great Gulf, fixed, so that they that would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.* The *State* and *Condition* that *Men enter* upon after *Death*, is *fixed* and *unalterable*. Therefore O *Sinner* what thou *dost* for *God*, for *Heaven*, for thy *Soul*, do it *quickly*, for this is the *only Time* and *Season* for thee to *work* in, and as thou now *Sowest* so thou shalt *Reap* for *ever*.

The *State* of *Man* under *Death* being thus, it *greatly concerns* all *Men* to *wait* for *Death*. *Job* tells us, it should be his *Practice*, Job 14. 14. *All the days of my appointed time, will I wait till my change comes.* Now *waiting* as it *relates* unto *Death* may *include* three things. *Meditation*, *Expectation*, and *Preparation*.

First, *Meditation*. He that *waits* for the *Accomplishment* of any *Worldly Business*, especially if it be of *Concernment* to him, how *busie* will his *Mind* and *Thoughts* be in *musing* upon it? He now that is *waiting* for the *coming* of *Death*, considering both the *certainty* of it, that it *will come*, and the *uncertainty* of it, when it *will come*, and *believes* withal that *Eternal Happiness*, or *Eternal Misery*, will be that *State* to which *Death* will *bring* him, cannot but have his *Thoughts* much ta-

ken up about it. This will make a *Soul Truly* and *Spiritually Wiſe*, and therefore the *Pſalmiſt* Prays, *Lord teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom.* He that is *truly Wiſe* will *Meditate* of *Death*, and he that *Meditates* of *Death*, will be *truly Wiſe*. The more we *number* our *Days* and *think* of our *Time*; the *fewer Sins* we ſhall have to *number*; for as a *Copy* is then *ſafeſt* from *blotting* when *duſt* is *thrown* upon it, ſo are we from *Sinning*, when we remember we are but *Duſt*.

Secondly, *Waiting includes in it Expectation.* That which we *wait* for, we are in *Expectation* of; and that Man, may be ſaid to *wait* for *Death*, that in *every Action* of his *Life*, in *every Alteration* of his *State* and *Condition*, ſaith to himſelf, *well*, I muſt *Die*; when though his *Bones* are *full* of *Marrow*, though *Riches* come in upon him *like a Flood*, yet *ſaith he*, *I muſt die*, I have no *abiding Place* here, I am but a *Stranger* and *Sojourner* in this *World*, as all my *Fathers* were. I have now *Wife* and *Children*, *Friends* and *Lands*, but I cannot *enjoy* any of theſe for *ever*; no nor my *Life* it *ſelf*, for I have but a *Leaſe* of it, and that but a *ſhort* one too, which will ſoon *expire*. *I expect Death* daily, even in the midſt of all my *Enjoyments*; I am but a *Steward* of all that *I have* here, and I muſt *ſhortly* be *called* to an *Account*; *ſuch* and *ſuch* are *gone* before *me*, and I am *following* after. The *other day* *Death* ſnatched away ſuch a *dear Relation* from me, this *day* it hath *ſeized* upon *ſuch a Friend* and *Acquaintance*, and to *morrow* the ſame *Meſſenger* may come for *me*. It is that *I expect*, and therefore *I wait* for it.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, *Waiting includes in it Preparation.* He that *waits* for *Death*, ought to be *preparing* for it. This now is *exceeding Requiſite*, becauſe it is above the *reach* of *Words* to *expreſs* how much *depends* upon this *Preparation*; it is that our *whole Life* ſhould have *reſpect* unto; *every* thing that we do, ought to have a *tendency* in it to make *Death Comfortable*. But of this *Preparation* for *Death*, I ſhall ſpeak more *hereafter* in its *proper place*.

This *waiting* for *Death* by way of *Meditation* on it, by way of *Expectation* of it, and by way of *Preparation* for it, is very *neceſſary*, conſidering what an *Important* difficult *Work* the *Work* of *dying* is; and this will *appear* if we conſider two things. *Firſt*, what *Death* is. *Secondly*, what *Death* doth. *Firſt*, what *Death* is, and here are three things conſiderable. *Death* is a *Deprivation*, *Death* is a *Deſolution*, and *Death* is a *Deſtruction*. All which make *Death* terrible, and the *Work* of *dying difficult*.

Firſt, *Death* is a *Deprivation*. It *ſtrips* us of all thoſe *Comforts* that in this *World* did *Refreſh* us. *Friends*, *Relations*, *Lands*, *Houſes*; theſe have often *delighted* us while we *live*; yea it may be too much, by ſetting our *Affections inordinately* upon them, and now what *Grief* of *Soul* doth it *create* to us, *violently* by *Death* to be *torn* from them? but *part* we and they *muſt* whether we will or no, and that for *ever*. *Job* tells us, *We came naked into the World, and we ſhall return naked out of it*. The Apoſtle indeed *ſeems* to intimate as if ſome *Men* in our *days* could *ſcarcely believe* it, and therefore to beat *Men* off from ſuch a *conceit*, he tells them, 1 *Tim.* 6. 7. *We brought nothing with us into this World*, this is true, and all Men will grant it; and ſays the Apoſtle, *it is certain we ſhall carry nothing out of it*. *Death* makes all lie *equal* in the *Duſt*.

Secondly, *Death* is a *Deſſolution.* In *Life* Soul and Body are *united*, and live lovingly together; there is a *near union* between them; a *union*, which becauſe of their *long Acquaintance* and *Co-habitation* together, is become ſo *dear*, that no *union* can be more *deſirable* as to the *continuance* of it, nor no *union* more *dreaded* as to the *Diſſolution* of it, *except* it be the *Spiritual union* between *Chriſt* and the *Soul.* There are *ſeveral kinds* of *unions*, and generally *Love* is the *ground* of them all. There is an *union* of *Friendſhip* between one *Friend* and *another*, whom *Love* hath *united* ſo *ſtrongly*, that they *ſeem* to *Act* as if one *Soul* animated them *both*; ſo *Jonathan* loved *David* even as his own *Soul*: This is a *ſtrong union.* There is alſo a *Relative union* between *Parents* and *Children*; ſo *Jacob* loved *Benjamin*, ſo that it is ſaid his *Life* was *bound* up in the *Life of the Lad*: This is a *ſtronger union* than the former. There is alſo a *Marriage union* between a *Man* and his *Wife*, and this is a *ſtronger union* than either of the former, *Man* and *Wife* making but *one Fleſh*, as the *Scripture ſpeaks.* But yet there is a *union* that is *ſtronger* and *nearer* than any of theſe *Unions*, and that is the *Union* between *Soul* and *Body*, for theſe two make but *one Perſon.* Now all *diſ-unions* are *uncomfortable*, and ſome *diſ-unions* are *dreadful*; and as ſome *diſ-unions* are *dreadful*, ſo thoſe *diſ-unions* are moſt *dreadful* which *rend* that from us that is *neareſt* and *deareſt* to us. For *Friends* to be *parted*, never to ſee the *Faces* of one another *again*, this is *ſad.* And therefore when St. *Paul* was *taking* his *leave* of the *Saints* in *Macedonia*, in *Acts* 20. 38. it is ſaid, *They fell on his Neck and kiſſed him, ſorrowing moſt for the words that he ſpake, that they ſhould ſee his Face again no more.* But it is *ſadder* for *Parents* and *Children* to be *diſ-*

united.

united. David found it ſo, when he *cryed* out ſo *Paſſionately* for his *Son*, 2 Sam. 18. 33. O Abſalom *my Son, my Son, would God I had died for thee*, O Abſalom, *my Son, my Son.* It is yet *more ſad* to have a *diſ-union* made between a *Man* and the *Wife* of his *Boſom*, when *God* ſhall take *away with a ſtroke the deſire of his Eyes*, one that hath been a *meet* and fit *Yoke-fellow* in the *Lord*; whoſe *Eyes* can *refrain* from *weeping*, or their *Hearts* from *bleeding* under ſuch a *ſad ſtroke of Providence.* But yet there is a *diſ-union*, that comes *nearer* than all theſe, and that is a *diſ-union* between the *Soul* and the *Body*, thoſe two *Old, Sweet Intimate Companions, born* together into the *World*, and who have *lived* in *ſweet Society* together all their *Days*; for *Death* to *come*, and make a *Diſſolution* between two ſo *near* and ſo *dear* together, by a *violent rending* and *tearing* the *Soul* and *Body* aſunder: Oh this is *exceeding ſad* and *dreadful* indeed, and that which muſt needs make the *Work* of *Dying hard* and *difficult.*

Thirdly, Death is a Deſtruction. So *David* calls it, *Pſal.* 90. 3. *Thou turneſt Man to deſtruction.* That *Excellent Frame of Man's Body* which *David* tells us, *was fearfully and wonderfully made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the lower parts of the Earth, by God himſelf*, and that with *Infinite Power* and *Wiſdom*, Pſal. 139. 14, 15. *Sickneſs* will not only *ſtain* its *Glory* and make the *Beauty* of it to *conſume like a Moth*: But *Death* will *Demoliſh* and *pull* it *down* to the *ground*, turn it into *Corruption*, and *Putrefaction*, yea into *Duſt* it ſelf, utterly *deſtroying* it ſo that it ſhall not be any more, until by the *Power* of *God*, it ſhall be *raiſed* up again at the *laſt day. Death* now being ſo *deſtructive* a thing unto *Man*, that nothing will con-

tent it *leſs* than his *Annihilation* in the *Grave*, *dying* muſt needs be a *hard* and *difficult* thing unto *Fleſh* and *Blood*.

Secondly, *Dying is an important difficult Work, if we conſider what Death doth:* now this I ſhall *explain* by opening theſe *two things*. Firſt, *Death occaſions our Spiritual Enemies to aſſault us*. Secondly, *It awakens Conſcience againſt us*.

Firſt, *Death occaſions our Spiritual Enemies to aſſault us moſt fiercely*. Now theſe *Enemies* are two, *Sin* and *Satan*.

Firſt, *Sin*. When doth the *Guilty Priſoners Crimes* come into his *Mind*, but when he hath a *Summons* to *appear* before his *Judge*? And when doth the *Guilt* of *Sin* fly in the *Face* of a *Sinner*, but when *Death* hath him under his *Arreſt*, to carry him before *God*, the *Great Judge* of *Heaven* and *Earth*? *Multitudes* of *Sins*, that before *lay hid*, and *ſeem'd* to be quite *forgotten*, now ſhew themſelves, and come *freſh* into a *Sinner's mind*, as ſo many *Witneſſes* againſt him, which upon the *Review*, he cannot but *Remember*, though formerly he had *forgot* them. Oh what a *number* of *horrid wickedneſſes* do now *haunt* his *Thoughts*, with *diſmal* apprehenſions in the *dark night* of *Death*, *walking up* and *down* like ſo many *Frightful Ghoſts*, *ſcaring* and *terrifying* his *Soul*! Well may an *Impenitent Sinner* ſay then unto *Death*, haſt thou *found* me O *mine Enemy*? art *thou* come O *Death* to call my *Sins* to *Remembrance* and to *ſlay* my *Soul*?

Secondly, *The Devil will then be very fierce* and *furious in his Aſſaults*. His *Time* now is but *ſhort*, and therefore his *Rage* is great: This is his *hour*;

hour; yea, his *laſt hour*, and therefore the *Power* of the *Prince* of *Darkneſs* is now moſt put forth; he *knows* he hath but a *few hours* more to *wait*, and if he can but *keep* the *Sinner* ſo *long*, he is then his for *ever*. Aſſure thy ſelf therefore O *Sinner*, he will be *diligent* in *watching* thy *Sick-bed* both by *night* and by *day*; and if all the *Power* or *Policy* of *Hell* can *prevent* it, neither *Cordial* ſhall *benefit* thy *Body*, nor *Counſel* and *Advice profit* thy *Soul*. The *Devil* is the *great Enemy* of *Souls*, and becauſe he is *miſerable himſelf*, he therefore *labours* that all *others* may be as *miſerable* as he is: now the *ways* by which he *expreſſeth* his *Enmity* againſt *Souls*, that he may *keep* them from *Eternal Life*, are theſe: *Sometimes* by *obſtructing* the *Work* of *Grace* in the *Souls* of Men; and thus he *works* with all his *might*, by all his *Wiles* and *Devices* that he can to *draw* men unto and *keep* them in a *way* of *Sin*, that they may not ſet their *Faces* towards *Heaven*, much more that they may not with *earneſt endeavours* of Soul *ſeek* to *obtain* it. It is true, *God* always hath the *Devil* in a *Chain*, and can if he pleaſeth, *reſtrain* and *hinder him* in *all* his *Malicious Attempts* againſt his *Children*, and many times he doth *manifeſt* his *Power* and *Grace* towards his *Servants* in a *dying hour*, by *curbing* in the *Malice* of that *Evil one*, that he ſhall not be able to *trouble* and *moleſt* them in their *Paſſage* into *Heaven*. But yet *ſometimes* God doth *then permit* the *Devil* to ſhew his *Malice* againſt his People; and then how *fiercely* and *furiouſly* doth he make his *Aſſaults* upon them? *Then* it is they *meet* with the *ſoreſt Trials*; and becauſe he could not *prevail* upon them formerly as a *Tempter*, now he turns to be their *Accuſer*, charging all their *Sins* upon their *Souls*, with all the *bloody aggravations* of them, *upbraiding* them with all their *Profeſſion*, as if they had been but *Hypocrites*.

pocrites in all that they had done. This *God* ſometimes *permits* him to do, that *their Grace* being *exerciſed*, the *Trial* thereof may *appear* to be more *precious* than *Gold* that *periſheth*, being found to the *Praiſe* and *Glory* of *God*, and the *Shame* and *Reproach* of their *Adverſary* the *Devil* in a moſt *Glorious Conqueſt* over all his *Temptations*; for through the *Grace* and *Strength* of *Chriſt* they *overcome* him in all his *Accuſations*, and notwithſtanding all, they go not only *quietly*, but ſometimes *Triumphantly* into *Heaven* and *Glory*.

Secondly, *Death awakens Conſcience.* The *Practice* of a *Sinner* is to *lull Conſcience aſleep*, that he may the more *quietly* and *undiſturbedly* go on in *Sin*; but when *Death* comes, uſually the *Conſcience* of a *Sinner* is *awakened*, if the *Sinner* be not *paſt feeling*, & given over to a *reprobate ſence*. *Conſcience* hath its *Times* and *Seaſons* of *ſtirring* in the *Souls* of Men; as *ſometimes* under the *Preaching* of the *Word Conſcience* begins to ſtir within a *Sinner*, and tells him that thoſe *Duties* that have been laid before him by the *Miniſter*, are the *Commands* of the *Great God*, and therefore ought to *oblige* him to *Obedience*: Here *Conſcience* is an *honeſt Informer*. Sometimes when a *Sinner* is taking the *Word* of *God* into his *hand* and *falls* a *Reading* of it, where he meets with ſome things *Commanded* by *God*, which *poſſibly* through *ignorance* or *heedleſſneſs* he did not take notice of before to be his *Duty*, *Conſcience* at ſuch a *time* takes *part* with the *Word* of *God*, and by its *Admonitions*, helps forward the *Convictions* of the *Word* upon the *Heart* of a *Sinner*, that ſo there may be an *Obediential Conformity* thereunto: Here now *Conſcience* is a *Faithful Monitor*. At another time, when a *Sinner* hath, not only through *careleſſneſs*, but through *wilfulneſs*

and

and *preſumption* fallen into the *Commiſſion* of *ſome great* and *horrid Sin*; poſſibly at ſuch a *time* ſome *Friend* comes to him and deals plainly and freely with him by *reproving* him *ſharply* and *ſeverely* for his *Sin*: *Conſcience* now joyns in with the *Reproof*, and becomes as *true* a *Friend* unto the *Sinner* as any he hath, if he will but *hearken* unto him; here now *Conſcience* thunders out both the *Threatnings* of the *Law*, and the *Vengeance* of the *Goſpel*; telling the *Sinner*, that *they that do ſuch things, are worthy of Death*; nay, that they deſerve *Hell*, for *becauſe of theſe things ſake*, ſays Conſcience, *cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Diſobedience*. *Conſcience* here now ſhews it ſelf an *exact* and *upright Reprover*. But then there is another *Office* that *Conſcience* hath, and that is to be an *Accuſer*, and this *Office* it commonly makes *uſe* of when it is throughly *awakened* upon a *Death-bed*; for when a Man comes to lie upon a *Sick-bed*, and ſees the *Viſions* of *Death* and the *Grave* before him, the *Charges* of *Conſcience* at ſuch a *time* upon a *Sinner*, are moſt *quick* and *ſmart*: for *Conſcience* being juſt as it were a *going* to *give* up its *Accounts* unto the *Great God*, the *Judge* of all *Fleſh*, where it will ſpeak *nothing* but the *Truth*, begins now to *give* the *Sinner* ſome *Account* of what it *muſt* and *will ſay* before the *Tribunal* of *God* then. And this is one *Reaſon*, why *Conſcience* is ſo *ſtrict* and ſo *ſevere* in its *Charge* againſt the *Soul*, that it will let nothing *paſs* that comes into the *mind* of a *Sinner*, without leaving ſome *ſtinging Remembrances* of its *former guilt*, even ſuch as are more bitter than *Death* it ſelf. This now makes *Dying* to be ſo *hard* and *difficult* a *Work*. O happy *Souls* are they who at *ſuch a time* have their *hearts ſprinkled* from the *Evil* of an *Accuſing Conſcience* by the *Blood* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, for they only can have

have *Peace* and *Comfort* in the *hour* of *Death*.

This *Work* of *dying* though it be ſo *hard* and *difficult* a *Work*, yet is it that we muſt all undergo, for *Death* is continually *haſtening* towards us. The *Bleſſed Apoſtle* St. *Paul* thought *Death* always to be *near*, it made ſuch *ſpeed* to *him*, that he *lookt* upon himſelf always as a *dying Man*, and therefore he tells us, *That he did die daily*, 1 Cor. 15. 31. and in *Rom.* 8. 36. *For thy ſake*, ſays he, *we are killed all the day long, we are counted as Sheep for the Slaughter*. And if we make *Hezekiah*'s *Reckoning* to be our *own*, (though he was under a fit of Sickneſs when he ſaid it, but we are in Health) yet we ſhall not be *much miſtaken* in the *Account*, when he tells us, *From day even unto night*, ſays he, *thou wilt make an end of me*. What though *Death* hath not *laid* his *cold hands* upon *us* by ſome *Mortal Diſeaſe*, yet may he not *lie* in *Ambuſh* for us, and cut us off ſuddenly? *Time* hath *Wings* and *flies* away *ſwiftly* from us; and truly *Death* doth not *creep*, but with the *ſame ſwiftneſs poſts* towards us. Man *is waſting* and *conſuming* every *day*; his *Body waſtes*, his *Strength waſtes*, his *Parts waſte*, his *Time waſtes*; yea, his very *Life waſtes*; and *whither tend* all theſe *Conſumptions* and *Waſtings*, but only to the *haſtening* of *Death*? neither will theſe *end* till they *terminate* in *Man's Diſſolution*.

But though *Man* in this Life is always *hurrying* on unto *Death*, yet how *few* are there that *conſider*, how *ſuddenly* themſelves or others may *die*? we *eaſily* and *ſlightly* paſs over the *Thoughts* of *Death*, and the ſuddenneſs of its *approach*, becauſe it is that we have no *mind* to. We would not *yet die* our ſelves, and therefore we *will* not *think* we *ſhall*. *Gueſts* that are *unwellcome* to us, we either *keep* them out of our *Houſes*, or *turn* them out as *ſoon*

as

as we *can*. Such are the *Thoughts* of *Death*, either of our own or others, and therefore if *poſſible* we *endeavour* to keep them out of our minds *altogether*; but if ſometimes they will *thruſt* in upon us, we *turn* them out again as ſoon as we can, *filling* our *Thoughts* with ſome *other things*. But *alas* this will not do *always*, for the *Thoughts* of *Death* will *return* again upon ſome *occaſions* or other. God by ſome *Providence* may be will awaken *Conſcience*, and *ſtir* up *Thoughts* of *Death* in our *minds*, let us do what we *can* to *hinder* them; yea, though we do what we *can* to *ſtifle* them; but this is no *thanks* to us, for of *our ſelves* we will not be *brought* to *think* of, or *regard* how *ſuddenly others* do and our *ſelves may die*, till by ſome *ſad Providence*, we are *brought* to the *Sick-bed* of ſome *Friend*, whom *Death* hath *bedewed* with *cold Sweats*, and *rackt* with *Convulſions*, ſo that he *lies gaſping* and *dying* before us: till our *Eyes* be brought thus to *Affect* our *Hearts*, our *Hearts* are ſeldom *Affected* as they ought with the *Sence* of our *Mortality*.

Now as *Death* comes *ſuddenly* upon many, ſo commonly it *comes violently* upon *wicked Men*, their *Souls* are not *ſurrendred* or *delivered* up unto *God*, but they are *rent* and *torn* from them by *Force* and *Violence*. A *wicked Man* cannot commend his *Soul* into the *Hands* of *God* when he is *dying*. Indeed we have a *form* of *making* the *Wills* of *dying Men*, wherein the *Perſon* that *lies* upon his *Death-Bed*, ſays, *I commend my Soul into the Hands of God* which (in the *Judgment* of *Charity*) becauſe we have nothing to do to *Cenſure* Mens *Eternal State*) in the *General* we muſt not wholly *Condemn*; yet it is to be *feared*, that *few* that ſay thoſe *words*, do it *heartily* and *ſincerely*, and upon ſuch *Grounds*, as *God* will *accept* and *receive*, when they leave their *Bodies*. There are ſome who have

lived.

lived in *Sin* all their *Days*, yet have *ſtrong preſumptions* of the *Mercy* of *God* upon their *Death-beds*. *God* is a *merciful God* ſay they; and therefore with *boldneſs* and *confidence* they *commend* their *Souls* unto him, *relying* upon his *Mercy* for *Salvation*: But ſuch are *ſtrangely Ignorant* of the *method* of *God* in *ſaving Sinners*, and by *Cuſtom* in *Sin*, and the *Judgment* of *God* upon them for it, they are become *inſenſible*, their *Conſciences* are *ſeared* and *aſleep*, and ſo neither their *Sin*, nor the *miſery* they are *liable* to for *Sin*, doth in the *leaſt trouble* them. But otherwiſe the *Death* of a *wicked Man* is *violent*, he doth not *reſign* up his *Soul* unto *God*, but it is *forced* from him whether he will or no.

But though a Sinner's *Death* be *violent*, yet no Man *dies* before his *time*, though ſome in *Scripture* are ſaid ſo to do: Hence we read that *Caution* of the *Wiſe Man*, Eccleſ. 7. 17. *Be not wicked over much, why ſhouldſt thou die before thy time.* And God threatens, *Pſal.* 55. 23. *Bloody and deceitful Men ſhall not live out half their Days.* And it is a common *ſaying* among us, that ſuch a one is *cut off* in the *midſt* of his *Days*.

To all which I ſhall only *return* this ſhort *Anſwer*, That *ſimply* and in *it ſelf* conſidered, it is *impoſſible* but that the *whole tale of Days*, that *God* hath *appointed* to *every* one, muſt be *fulfilled*, according to the *Number* of them. They are ſet *down* by *God*, and no *Man* can *die* before *God's time*. It is *true* a Man may *die* before *his time*, that is, *before* he is *prepared* by *Grace*, or *before* he is *ripened* in the *courſe* of *Nature*: Such *expreſſions* as theſe denote no more, than *either*, that *God* cuts them off in their *full ſtrength*, and in the *vigour* of their *years*, when yet they *might* according to *humane probability* have lived *much longer*; or *elſe*, comparing the *ſhortneſs*

ſhortneſs of their *lives* with the *length* of *others*, *God* ſeems as it were to *break* it off in the *very midſt* before he hath *finiſhed* it.

And is *Death* the *lot* of *all Men* ſooner or later? Though all *die* not the *ſame way*, and *after* the *ſame manner*, nor at the *ſame time*; yet is *Death* the *end* of all *Men*? Doth *Death* paſs upon *all* becauſe *all* have *ſinned*? Why then, let *every* one *prepare for Death*. The *Spirit* of *God* tells us, that *all fleſh is graſs, and the goodlineſs thereof as the flower of the field*, which *ſoon withers* and *dies*. And is it ſo with theſe *Bodies* of ours, that they are *frail* and *dying*? The *Wiſdom* of a *Chriſtian* then ſhould manifeſt it ſelf; not in labouring to *avoid* the *ſtroke* of *Death*, for that is *impoſſible*; nor yet in *ſpending* too *much time* in *daubing* over a *Houſe* of *Clay*; or in *repairing* and *propping* up of an *Earthly Tabernacle*, which when we have done all, will at length *crumble* into *duſt*; but ſeeing the *Body* is appointed for and will *turn to duſt*, to be *ſollicitous* that when it *dies*, it may *die happily* and *comfortably*.

Chriſtian, whoever thou art, into whoſe *hands* theſe *lines* may fall, know that I am come to *acquaint* thee with a *meſſage* from the *True* and *Faithful God*, that cannot *lye*, that the *Leaſe* of thy *Life* is almoſt *expired*, and that the time of thy *departure* is not *far off*: What *habitation* haſt thou *provided* for thy *precious* and *immortal Soul*, that it may not at its *departure* out of thy *Body* take up its *dwelling* with *Devils* and *damned Spirits* for ever? It may be thou haſt *provided* well for thy *Wife* and *Children*, heap'd up much *Silver* and *Gold* together for them, added *Houſe* to *Land*, that they may *dwell* upon the *Earth*; it may be thou haſt *ſettled* thy *Eſtate*, ſo as to *prevent* all *diſputes* and *quarrelings* when thou art *dead*: I cannot *ſay* but thou haſt *done*

well,

well, and that theſe things *ought* to be *done*, I *condemn* thee not: But what haſt thou *done* for thy *Soul* all this *while*? Haſt thou not laid out *much more care* and *pains* for thy *never dying Soul*, than thou haſt for thy *periſhing Body*? If not, let me ſay unto thee, *O careleſs Sinner*, as the *Mariners* ſaid unto *Jonah* in the *Storm*, *What meaneſt thou, O Sleeper?* What *meaneſt* thou *O drowſy ſtupid Sinner? Ariſe*, for *God's ſake*, and for thy *Soul's ſake*, and beſtir thy ſelf; look about thee; Whither art thou *going*? What will *become* of thee? Is not *Eternity* before thee? And muſt not thy *State* and *Condition* be for *ever* hereafter, as thy *Preparations* are now? O that *God* would open thine *Eyes*, that thou mayeſt ſee what will make for thine *Eternal Intereſt*, before *Death* open them, when it will be too late.

Now that I may preſs this *Exhortation* the more home upon thy *Conſcience*, I ſhall lay down two or three *Reaſons* for thy more thorough *Conviction*, that it will be much for thy *Intereſt* and *Advantage* to be ready and *prepared* for *Death*.

Firſt, *Conſider*, *Conſcience will then be very buſie and active in reviewing thy Life*. Now if for the *moſt part* thereof thou haſt *walked uprightly* with *God*, *Conſcience* will then give thee *ſome meaſure* of *boldneſs* towards *God*. But now if at *ſuch a time*, when *Conſcience* is *reflecting* back upon thy *former Life*, it cannot but ſay, if it will ſpeak the *Truth* (as uſually upon a *Death bed* it doth,) I have been *conſidering* thy former *ways*, and the *Account* that I can give of them in *general* is, that they *abound* with *multitudes* of *Sins* and *Provocations*, which no Man can *number*; to *particularize* them would be *endleſs*; but if it may *tend* any way to thy *Repentance*, before it be *too late*: Remember, *O Sinner*,

(for

(for I *do*,) how *long* God hath *lengthened* out thy *Life*, how many *tenders* of *Chriſt* and *Salvation* by him he hath made unto thy *Soul*, which thou haſt *rejected*. How *many years* of *Sabbaths* haſt thou enjoyed? How *often* hath the *Spirit* of *God* moved upon thy *Soul*, and ſtirred up *holy motions* in thy *Heart*, which thou haſt *reſiſted* and *quenched*? What *multitudes* of *Mercies*, wherewith *God* would have *drawn* thee to himſelf, haſt thou *ſlighted* and *abuſed*? How many *corrections* and *afflictions* hath *God* laid upon thee, wherewith he would have *imbittered Sin* unto thy *Soul*, that *himſelf* might have been more *ſweet*, which thou haſt *deſpiſed* and *grown* more *hardened* in Sin under? How hath the *Patience* of *God* been even *wearied* with *waiting* upon thee, whilſt thou haſt *preſſed* him with *thy Sins*, even as a *Cart* is *preſſed* with *Sheaves*, and yet thou wouldſt not *forbear* thy *wicked ways*? Doeſt thou not *remember* the *particular times* and *days*, the ſeveral *ſeaſons* and *occaſions* wherein it hath been *thus* and *thus* with thee? Surely, ſays *Conſcience*, thou canſt not *forget it*, theſe things are all down in *my Book*, though thou *thoughteſt* I took no *notice* of them, and *I am* now a going to *open* this *Book* to ſhew it to thy *Judge*, where I ſhall *juſtifie* them all to thy *very face*; for I do *very well remember every one of them*: O that for thy *Soul's ſake* I could ſay, I do as well *remember* thy *praying*, thy *hearing*, thy *reading*, thy *Meditation* of *holy* and *heavenly things*, with the *ſincerity*; yea, the *fervour* and *earneſtneſs* of thy *Soul* expreſſed in all theſe; that I could bear *Witneſs* to thy *Faith*, to thy *Humility*, to thy *Patience* and *Self-denial*, to thy *Repentance* and *Godly Sorrow* for *Sin*, to the *daily longing* and *breathing* of thy *Soul* after the being *rid* of a *Body* of *Death*, that thou mighteſt never *offend God any more*; but I cannot ſay theſe *things* of thee, and *I dare* not

now

now *flatter* thee and tell thee, that I *can*, when I *cannot*, and if I ſhould it would do thee no good at all; for the *Great Judge* of *Heaven* and *Earth*, before whom thou and I are now *going* to *appear*, knows all *theſe things* that I have now *told* thee of to be true, and will *quickly* undeceive thee, whatever thy *hopes* are now, and make thee *know* theſe things unto thy *everlaſting confuſion*; unleſs out of the *infinite Riches* of his *Grace* and *Mercy* he give thee *Repentance* preſently, which thou canſt have very *little hopes* of now at *Death*, ſince thou didſt not *turn* to him in thy *Life*.

Secondly, *Conſider, when thou comeſt to die, thou wilt then have to do with God himſelf immediately.* It is true, while we are here in the *Body* we have to do with *God*, and all our *Affairs* whatſoever are *tranſacted* under his *Eye* and in his *preſence*; therefore we read in *Heb.* 4. 13. *That all things are naked and open unto the Eyes of that God with whom we have to do.* There is no *Prayer* we make, no *Sermon* we hear, no *Holy Duty* we perform, no *Mercy* we enjoy, no *Affliction* we lie under, nor any *Action* we do in our whole lives, but we have to do with *God* in it: But when we come to *die*, we have to do with *God* in another way and manner than what we have to do with him in this World; here we have to do with *God* in *Duties* and *Ordinances*; but it is in ſuch a way as is becoming our *preſent ſtate* of *diſtance* from him; of which I may ſay, as the *Prophet* doth in another caſe, it is neither *clear* nor *dark*, inſomuch that *Faith* it ſelf hath much a-do ſometimes to *diſcover God* unto the *Soul*; and no *wonder* then, if a *Carnal Eye* cannot *diſcern* him: But when as the *Wiſe Man* ſpeaks, the *Soul* ſhall *return to God that gave it*, the *Soul* then goes into the *immediate* Preſence of *God*, having to do with him

him in ſuch an *immediate way* and *manner*, that there is nothing in the *Eye* of the *Soul* to obſcure or hinder the ſight of the *Divine Preſence*; no *vail* of *Fleſh* between *God* and *it*, but *naked Majeſty* and *Glory* diſcovers it *ſelf* to the *Soul* with the *rays* of its own *light*, which is ſo full of *wonder* and *aſtoniſhment*, that we know not *now* how to *conceive* of it, much leſs to *expreſs* it. And if a *holy Prophet*, ſeeing but a *Viſion* of *God*, crys out, *Wo is me, I am undone, for I am a Man of unclean Lips, and mine Eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of Hoſt*, *Iſai* 6.5. O how much more may it *overwhelm* a *Soul*, when *ſtripp'd* of its *Body*, to ſee not only a *Viſion* of *God*, but to *ſee God himſelf* as it were *face* to *face*! But this is not all; for the *Soul* is not by *Death* barely brought *before* the *Great* and *Glorious God*, but it is *brought before him* to be *judged* to an *Eternal State*. In this Life we come into the *preſence* of *God* upon a *Treaty* of *Peace*, between *God* and our *Souls*. *God is now in Chriſt reconciling Sinners unto himſelf*, and is willing not to *impute* their *Sins* and *Treſpaſſes* unto them; and if they will *accept* of his *terms* they may make *Peace* with him, for he ſaith now unto *Sinners*, let them *take hold of my ſtrength and ſo make Peace with me, and they ſhall make Peace with me*; but if *Sinners* will not throw away the *Weapons* of their *Rebellion* out of their Hands, I mean their *Sins* out of their Hearts, whereby they *fight* againſt *God*; but *Death* comes and ſtrikes them *dead* with their *Weapons* in their Hands, I mean in the *embracements* of their *luſts*; *God* and they muſt *treat* after another *manner*, not upon *terms* of *Peace*, but upon *terms* of *Judgment*; for away they go *immediately* after *Death* before *God* as a *Judge*, the *Spirit* then *returning unto God that gave it*, to receive a *determinative ſentence* of *Happineſs* or Miſery for *ever*. And who would not

not then be *always prepared* for the *ſtroke* of *Death*, that carries the *Soul* into the *preſence* of ſuch a *Judge*, who hath *power* to, and who will *determine* its *everlaſting State*?

Thirdly, As a farther *Argument* to perſwade *Chriſtians* unto a *preparation* for *Death*, *Conſider the miſery of thoſe who when Death comes upon them are unprovided for it*: And this I ſhall do in theſe following particulars briefly.

Firſt, *An unprepared Sinner at Death loſeth all his outward comforts and enjoyments.* In this *Life* it may be *Providence* did *abound* towards him with *variety* of outward enjoyments, as *Riches*, *Relations*, *Pleaſures*, *Profits*, and the like; but *Death* is now come and hath *ſwept* away all of theſe things that were *deſirable*. It was a *doleful expreſſion* of *Abraham* unto the *Rich Man* in *Hell*, Luke 16.25. *Son remember thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things.* Oh what a *cutting word* was this to his *Soul*, when he was *paſſed* into another *World*? And will it not *wound* thy *Soul* as deeply, *O Sinner*, who haſt not made thy *Preparations* for *Eternity*, when thou comeſt to paſs through the *Valley of the Shadow of Death*, to conſider thou haſt received all thy *good things* already? yea, and having *received* them, if thou couldſt *always live* with them, and keep them *always* with thee, it might be ſomething to thee; but alas thou canſt not; for when *Death* comes it will turn thee out of all thy *poſſeſſions* and *enjoyments*; when thou dieſt thou ſhalt *take nothing in thy hand with thee of all thy labour*, as the *Wiſe Man* ſpeaks, *Eccl.* 5. 15. The things of this World will not go one *ſtep* with thee beyond this *preſent Life*; and think, *O Sinner*, if thou canſt, what a *doleful* thing will it be for a *poor Soul* to be ſ

dow

down naked upon the *vast Ocean* of *Eternity*, having nothing to *relieve* and *support* it self with, all its *Riches* and *Treasures* being left behind it in *another World.*

Secondly, *The Misery of an unprepared Sinner for Death appears in this, that then he shall be deprived of all the Seasons and Opportunities of Grace.* It is no mean *Mercy* to thee, *O Sinner*, hadst thou a *Heart* to improve it, that thou now enjoyest the *Ordinances* of *Life* and *Salvation*, that thou hast the *tenders* of *Mercy*, the *entreaties* of *Ministers*, the *motions* of the *Spirit*, *invitations* to *come* unto *Christ*, leave and *liberty* to cast down thy self at the *Feet* of *God*, and by *Prayer* and *Supplication* seek his *Face*, and be as earnest and fervent as thou wilt or canst be for *Mercy*: But let me tell thee at *Death* the door of *Mercy* will be for ever shut, there will be no *Praying*, or *Preaching*, or *Hearing* in the *Place* whither thou art going; no declaring this *loving kindness* of *God* in the *Grave*, nor this *faithfulness* of his in *Destruction.* Now the *Ordinances* of *God*, though *precious* to *others*, yet are they *tedious* and *irksome* unto thee; the *Church* of *God* to thee is little better than a *Prison*, the *Sabbath-day* is the *longest day* in the *Week* in thy *Account*, thou wouldst fain be rid of it; the *Commands* of *Christ*, which to a *Gracious Soul* are *sweet* and *delightful*, are no better than *Bonds* and *Fetters* unto thee, which thou wouldst fain break asunder and cast away from thee; the *Language* of thy *Carnal Heart* is this; (though the *Sermon* be commonly measured by the space of an hour;) yet thou *cryest*, when will the *Glass* be out, when will the *Duty* be done, when will the *Sabbath* be over, that we may follow the *World* again; thou thinkest *Prayer* too long, and *Sermons* too long, and *Sabbaths* too long: Well, be patient,

patient, *O Sinner*, for a while, and in a ſhort time thou ſhalt never be troubled with theſe long painful *Duties* any more; *Death* will eaſe thee of all theſe *Burthens*; that *Night* is coming upon thee, wherein there ſhall be no more of *theſe works* done for ever; and then though with *Eſau*, thou ſhouldſt *carefully ſeek a place of Repentance*, with *Tears*, to bewail thy former *Folly*, yet thou ſhouldſt not find it.

Thirdly, *The Miſery of an unprepared Sinner for Death lies in this, that he then loſeth all his hopes and expectations.* Hope, it is the *Anchor* and *Support* of the *Soul* in time of *Trouble*; ſometimes the *Soul* is brought to ſuch *ſtraits*, and under ſuch *ſore preſſures*, that it hath nothing to *live* upon but *Faith* and *Hope*; *Faith* believes there ſhall be a *happy iſſue* out of thoſe *troubles* the *Soul* is under, and therefore *Hope* encourageth the *Soul* to wait patiently till a time of *Deliverance* doth come; it will come, ſaith *Faith*, for *God* is *Faithful* who hath *promiſed*; I will wait therefore, ſaith *Hope*, and my *expectations* ſhall not be in *vain*, for they that wait upon *him* ſhall not be *aſhamed*: But now all the *Hopes* of a *Sinner* will *fail* and *diſappoint* him at *Death*; for indeed he had no true well-grounded *Hope*. We read in *Scripture* of a *true* and *lively Hope*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. but this is found only in the *Saints*, *Bleſſed be God* (ſaith the *Apoſtle*) *who hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead*: But a *Sinner's Hope* is not a *lively* but a *dead Hope*; and what can the *Fruits* of ſuch a *Hope* be but *ſhame* and *diſappointment*? When a Wicked Man *dies*, ſays the *Wiſe Man*, *his Expectations ſhall periſh*, Prov. 11. 7. And *what is the Hope of the Hypocrite*, ſays *Job*, *though he hath gained, when God taketh away his Soul*, Job 27. 8. why nothing but *ſhame* and *diſ-*

diſappointment. And *if Hope deferred, maketh the Heart ſick*, as *Solomon* tells us, then *Hope fruſtrated*, eſpicially a *Hope* of *Heaven* and *Happineſs*, muſt needs *kill*, even as with a *thouſand Deaths*.

Fourthly, *An unprepared Sinner at Death loſeth his Soul; and this is ſuch a Jewel that its worth and value is not known on Earth, but ſhall be fully known in Hell.* Were it poſſible for thee, O *Sinner*, to underſtand what is included in the *loſs* of thy *Soul*, it would be as a *Dagger* at thy *Heart*; the thoughts of it would make thee *mingle thy drink with weeping*, and *imbitter* all the *Comforts* of thy whole life unto thee. In *Matt.* 16. 26. *What is a Man profited if he gains the whole World, and loſe his own Soul, or what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* Behold here, O *Sinner*, of what an *incomparable worth* and *value* thy *Soul* is, and what an *irreparable loſs* it is if thou *loſeſt* it; this is ſuch a *loſs*, as there is none like it, for the *gain* of the whole *World* cannot *balance* the *loſs* of one *Soul*. It is alſo an *irrecoverable loſs*: God hath given thee *two Eyes, two Hands*, and *two Feet*, and if thou loſeſt one *Eye* thou haſt another, or if thou *loſeſt* one *Limb*, thou haſt more; but *God* hath given thee but one *Soul*, and if thou loſeſt that, thou haſt no *more*. If thou *loſeſt* thy *Eſtate*, by thy *diligence* and the *Bleſſing* of God upon thy *endeavours*, thou mayeſt *recover* it again: yea, if thou *loſeſt* thy *Life*, thou mayeſt be a *gainer* by it, for thou mayeſt *find* it again, for he that *loſeth* his *Life* for *my ſake*, ſays Chriſt, *ſhall find it*. How ſo, ſhall he *live again* here on *Earth?* no, but he ſhall *find* it with *infinite gain* and *advantage* in *Heaven*; for inſtead of a *Temporal Life*, he ſhall gain an *Eternal Life*. But if thy *Soul*, O *Sinner*, be once *loſt*, thou art undone for *ever*; this is ſuch a *loſs*, that the thoughts thereof

may make thy *Hair* ſtand on end upon thy Head; yea, it is that which when ever thou *readeſt* or *thinkeſt* of, may make thy *Heart* to ake; do not thy *Ears tingle*, and thy *Loyns tremble* to hear of it?

Having thus laid down ſome *quickning* Conſiderations to ſtir up *Chriſtians* to *prepare* for *Death*. I ſhall in the next place *endeavour* to propound ſuch *Directions* as may, by the *Bleſſing of God*, be helpful to them in their *Preparations* for their *latter end*.

Now the *General Direction for a Chriſtian's Preparation for Death is to get an Intereſt in Chriſt by a Work of Converſion, changing the State and Condition of the Soul.* This now is the *main Work* of a *Chriſtian*, without which he is no real *Chriſtian*. *Profeſſion* of *Chriſtianity* gives a Man the *Name* of a *Chriſtian*, but it is only *Implantation* into *Chriſt* by believing, that gives a Man the *being* of a *Chriſtian*. It is *Eſſential* to a *Chriſtian* as a *Chriſtian*, that he be in *Chriſt*. By *Nature* all Men are *Strangers*; yea, *Enemies* to *God* and *Chriſt*; and therefore it is *neceſſary*, that there be a *Manifeſtation* of the *Power* of *Converting Grace* to change our *Hearts*, and *Sanctifie* our *Natures*, and till this be done, we are but *Nominally Chriſtians*; we have only a *Name* to *live*, but we are *dead*. He that is not in *Chriſt*, is not a *Chriſtian* in *Deed* and in *Truth*. Now this being in *Chriſt*, which is always accompanied with *Converſion* and *Sanctification*, is that which makes *Life comfortable*, *Death eaſy*, and *Heaven ſure* and *certain*. He that hath an *Intereſt* in *Chriſt*, may live *joyfully* in any *Condition*, if he knows but his own *Happineſs*, he need not be *troubled*, let what will befal him; whether he hath more or leſs, he hath it with the *Love* of *God*; all his *Mercies* come ſwiming to him in the *Blood* of *Jeſus*, and therefore he may well ſit down and be

content;

content; yea, be *thankful* and *rejoyce*, knowing that all things ſhall work together for his *Eternal Benefit* and *Advantage*; there being no *Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*. And as for *Death* how *eaſy* a thing is it to ſuch a *Soul*? I confeſs *Death* is very *terrible* to one that is *out* of *Chriſt*, but to one that is *in Chriſt*, *Death* is his *Friend*; yea, his *beſt Friend* next to *Chriſt*; what ſays the Apoſtle of ſuch, 1 *Cor.* 3. 21. *All things are yours*, that is for your *Benefit* and *Advantage*, *whether Paul or Apollo's, or Cephas, or things preſent, or things to come, or Life, or Death, all is yours*. But how comes all this about? why becauſe *you* are *Chriſt's*, and *Chriſt* is *God's*. *Death* therefore cannot hurt ſuch. The *Happineſs* of thoſe that are *in Chriſt*, lies in the *Manifeſtation* of the *Divine Love* and *Favour* unto their *Souls*; now this *Death* cannot *hinder* them of. I know many of *God's People*, have not the *Light* of his *Countenance* lifted up upon their *Souls* in *Death*, but their paſſage to *Heaven* is *dark* and *uncomfortable*; *God loves* them, though they know it not; yet by this *darkneſs* and *uncomfortableneſs* which *Death* brings upon them by their *paſſage* through it, *Death* is but bringing them to the *moſt clear Diſcoveries* of the *Love* of *God* to their *Souls* in *Heaven*, with which they ſhall then be *filled* and *ſatisfied* to all *Eternity*. Our *Comfort* in *Death* lies in the *Knowledge* of our *Intereſt* in *Chriſt*, but ſo doth not our *Happineſs*, that lies in our *Intereſt* in *Chriſt*, whether we *know* it or *not*. Our *Conſolation* in a *dying hour* ſprings from our *Aſſurance* that *Chriſt* is *ours*, and we are *his*, but our *ſafety* and *ſecurity* in that *hour*, ariſeth from the *certainty* of our *Intereſt* in *Chriſt*. Indeed our *Ignorance* that we are in *Chriſt* when we come to *die*, may *prejudice* our *preſent Peace* and *Comfort* in *Death*; but it ſhall not *pre-*

judice our *future Happineſs* after *Death*. They that are in *Chriſt* are always in a *ſafe Condition*; they may *die uncomfortably* indeed, but they cannot *die miſerably*; they are *built* upon the *Rock* of *Ages*; and therefore though they *fall* by *Death* into the *Grave* even as *others*, yet they *periſh* not with *others*. *Death* may *kill* them, but it cannot *hurt* them. He that hath an *Intereſt* in *Chriſt*, being *united* to *him* by *Faith*, need not *fear* what *Death* can *do* unto him. True and thorough *Converſion* from *Sin* unto *God*, is a *ſure Foundation* for *Peace* and *Safety* both in *Life* and *Death*. He that is *intereſted* in *Chriſt* is built upon a *Rock* that is *Impregnable*, the *Gates* of *Death* and *Hell* *ſhall not prevail againſt him*. To behold a Man *dying* that is in *Chriſt*, this is *Comfortable*; for ſuch a one *dies* that he may *live* for *ever*, and *changes* only a *Temporal* for an *Eternal Life*. To behold a *Chriſtleſs Perſon*, but not in a *dying condition*, this is ſomething *tolerable*, for who can tell but that the next *Sabbath*, or the next *Sermon*, God may make it a time of *Love* to his *Soul*, even ſuch a *day* of his *Power* and *Grace* towards him, as thereby *ſavingly* to *draw* him unto *Chriſt*. But to behold a *dying Man*, and a *Chriſtleſs Man* alſo, this is *dreadful*; yea, even *intolerable*, for ſuch a one *dies* from *Earth* to be *Damned* in *Hell*. It was a *ſad* and *doleful Complaint* (and Oh that it might *ſtartle* and *awaken* ſome *ſecure Sinner* to look after *Chriſt*) that was once *uttered* by one upon a *Death-Bed*, being juſt a *dying*, Oh I want nothing now but a *Chriſt* to *Save* me. O *miſerable State* and *Condition* indeed, for in having *him*, the *Soul* hath all that can do it *good*, or make it *good*; but in *wanting* of *him*, the *Soul* hath nothing that can do it *good* here, or make it *happy hereafter*. *Intereſt* in *Chriſt* is the only *true Preparation* for *Death*. This now

is

is the *general Direction* for our *Preparation* for *Death*, without which there is no *dying happily* or *comfortably*. But the more particular *Directions* are theſe that *follow*.

Firſt, *Wouldſt thou be prepared for Death, then die unto Sin, by daily and conſtant endeavours to mortifie and ſubdue the Power and Strength of it in the Exerciſe of a Holy Life.* The Apoſtle tells us in *Rom.* 6. 23. *That the wages of Sin is Death.* By which he means *Temporal* and *Eternal Death*: This now is the *Fruit* of *Sin*, for *Luſt* when it hath *conceived, bringeth forth Sin, and Sin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth Death.* But is there no way to *eſcape* this *Death*? yes, from *Spiritual* and *Eternal Death*, there is a *deliverance*, and therefore the *Apoſtle* tells us, in *Rom.* 6. 13. *That if we through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the Body*, that is the *deeds* of the *Body* of *Sin*, then *we ſhall live and not die*; that is we ſhall *live Spiritually*, and not *die Eternally*; and as for a *Temporal Death*, though we cannot ſcape the *ſtroke* of it, yet we ſhall be free from the *Curſe* and *Sting* of it. Wouldſt thou therefore, O *Chriſtian*, be *prepared* for *Death* when it comes, then take from it now its *Power* and *Strength*. When the *Philiſtines* ſaw *Sampſon* was too ſtrong for them, they *labour* to know wherein his great *Strength* lay, and when they found it was in the *Hair* of his *Head*, they would not be quiet till they got his *Hair* cut off. Every *Chriſtian* hath to deal with a *dreadful Enemy* unto *Nature*, and that is *Death*: Aſſault he will all of us at one time or other; yea, and be too *hard* for us. If now we would *overcome* him, we muſt find out where his great *Strength* lies; the *Spirit* of *God* now tells us, that the *Power* and *Sting* of *Death* is *Sin*, ſo we read in 1 *Cor.* 15. 56. *The Sting*

of Death is Sin. And the *Power* and *Sting* of every Mans *particular Death* lies in his own *Sins. Death* cannot *hurt* any of us but by that *Power* and *Strength* that our *ſins* put into its *hands. Chriſtian*, the way how thou mayeſt *overcome* thine *Enemy Death*, is ſet open to thee, his *Strength* is diſcovered to thee, that thou mayeſt have thine *Advantage* againſt him, to weaken him, and to take away his *Strength*, and that is by *dying* unto *Sin*, this will be the *Death* of *Death*. *Yield* not therefore at any *time* to its *Solicitations*, for this is but to make *Death* the more *ſtrong* and *Powerful* to wound thy *Soul* and *Conſcience*. When therefore thou art *tempted* unto any *Sin*, though it may ſeem *pleaſant* and *delightful*, yet before thou *yieldſt* unto the *Temptation*, ſay to thy *ſelf*, O my *Soul*, how will this *reliſh* with me when I come to *lie* upon a *Death-bed*, and my *Soul* ſits trembling upon my *Lips* ready to take its *Flight* unto the *Tribunal* of *God*? What *Peace* and *Comfort* will it procure to my *Conſcience* then? Will not the *Remembrance* of it prove more *bitter* than *Gall* and *Wormwood*, and the *grating Reflections* of *Conſcience* more *ſtinging* and *tormenting* to the *Soul*, than a thouſand *Deaths* could poſſibly be? Wouldſt thou not have *Death bitter* then, let not *Sin* be *ſweet* now. *Part* with *Sin* betimes, get that removed that is the *troubler* of a *Death-Bed*, and the *Sting* of *Death*; and that is *Sin*. Make it your *daily buſineſs* to be *dying* unto *Sin*. Now this *dying* unto *Sin implies* our *conſtant endeavours* to *ſubdue* the *Power* and *Strength* of *Sin*, and this is done by *daily Mortification*. It is true in the *People* of *God Sin* doth not *Reign*, and that is *Comfortable* to *conſider*. *Sin* in the *Work* of *Converſion* hath *received* ſuch a *Wound* as is *incurable*; but yet wherever *Sin* is in any *Soul*, it doth not uſe to lie *dormant*; but where it cannot *Reign*, it will *moleſt*

and

and *ſtruggle*; yea, and it may be, *prevail* to a *Victory* ſometimes, even *over* thoſe, *over* whom it ſhall never *prevail* unto *Condemnation*. This now calls for a *conſtant work* of *Mortification*. Every day there are *corrupt Inclinations* and *Propenſions* to be kept in, *ſinful thoughts* to be *contended* with, *Evil motions* to be ſuppreſt; and it is not the *meer Habit and Principle* of *Grace received* in our *firſt Converſion*, without the *vigorous* and *conſtant Exerciſe* of it in a way of *Mortification*, that will *overcome* all theſe. Though *Regeneration* hath given *Sin* its *Deaths* wound, yet *Mortification* muſt *daily weaken* and *ſubdue* its *Power* and *Strength*; and according as the *work* of *Mortification* is *ſucceſsful* in the *Soul*, ſo will be our *Peace* and *Purity* in *Life*, and our *Joy* and *Comfort* in *Death*.

Secondly, *Keep Conſcience clear, that it may not have the guilt of any known ſin to charge you withal.* Now *Conſcience* may then be ſaid to be *clear*, when it is *pure*, and when it is a *Peaceable Conſcience* that is *peaceable* muſt be *pure*, and a *pure Conſcience*, uſually is a *peaceable Conſcience*. When *Conſcience* is free from all *known* and *willful defilements*, and not *juſtly burthened* with the *guilt* of *Sin*, then is *Conſcience clear*. If it be *poſſible* do not *wound Conſcience*, and if you would not, have a *care* of *Sin*: he that is not *watchful* to *avoid Sin*, cannot have a *clear Conſcience*. It is *impoſſible* for us, while we are *ſurrounded* about with *Infirmities*, and *oppreſſed* with a *Body* of *Sin* and *Death* (which the Apoſtle complains of) to *keep* our *ſelves free* and *unſpotted* from all *Sin*, for in *many things* we *offend* all. Thoſe *Sins* now that are *Sins* of *weakneſs* and *Infirmity*, as they are *uſually* ſmall *Sins*, and ſo hardly *diſcernable* many times by *our ſelves* nor *others*; ſo they do not *break* our *Peace* with *God*, nor *obſcure* the *clearneſs* of our *Conſciences*; but they

are *known* and *willful ſins* that *waſte* and *wound* the *Conſcience*, and they that are not *careful* to *keep* themſelves from *ſinning* thus, can never have a *clear Conſcience*, nor be in a *prepared State* for *Death*; for how can *Conſcience* ſpeak *Peace* unto the *Soul* upon a *Death-bed* with the *guilt* of any *known ſin* upon it? If you *wound Conſcience by ſin* now, *Conſcience* will *wound* you for *ſin* hereafter. Any known *ſin* committed againſt *Conſcience*, will exceedingly *diſcompoſe* and *trouble* the *Soul* in a *dying hour*. Reader, doth thy *Conſcience* reprove thee for living in any ſinful way, or for being *careleſs* and *remiſs* in looking after *Heaven* and *Eternity*? hearken unto *Conſcience* now, that *Conſcience* may *hearken* unto you *another day*. O Sinner, when thou ſhalt come to *lie* upon a *Death-bed*, and begin to *examine* thy *Conſcience* how things are with thee, and how it is like to go with thee for *ever*; thou wouldeſt then be glad to have *Conſcience* give thee a *comfortable anſwer*, and ſay *all* is *well*, and *all ſhall* be *well* with thee to *Eternity*; thou haſt been *Faithful* in following my *Counſels* and *Reproofs*, that from the Great *God* according to his *Word* I *delivered* unto thee, and now *I* will be as *Faithful* in declaring to thee, the *Truth* of things as to thy *future State*, *fear* not therefore, for it ſhall *certainly* go *well* with thee for *ever*. Wouldſt thou now have *Conſcience* ſpeak thus *comfortably* to thee at *Death*? hearken to what *Conſcience* ſaith to thee *now*; for if thou doſt not *hearken* unto *Conſcience* in thy *life time*, when it *Faithfully Admoniſheth* and *Reproves* thee; *Conſcience* will not *hearken* unto thee at thy *Death*, to *excuſe* and *acquit* thee, but will *prove* thy *great Accuſer* and *Condemner*. *Guilt* lying upon the *Conſcience*, makes the *Soul aſhamed* and *afraid* to come *before God* even in this *Life*, much more at *Death*. A *Guilty Sinner* chooſeth

chooſeth rather to *run* away from *God*, that if it were *poſſible God* might not *find him.* Thus we imitate our *Grand-Father Adam*, who as ſoon as he had *ſinned*, endeavours to *hide* himſelf from *God* among the *Trees* of the *Garden.* And who of us is there but may *obſerve* the ſame by *himſelf*; what *ſlaviſh fear*, what *dejection* and *ſinking* in our *Spirits* doth *ſeize* upon us when we come *before God* in the *Performance* of a *Duty* after we have *provoked* him by ſome *known ſin*? with what *Doubtings*, with what *Fears* and *miſgiving* of *heart* do we come into his *Preſence*, as if we were not *willing* that *God* ſhould take any notice that we are before *him*; and if we are not in *continual pain* while we are *performing* the *Duty*, yet we would *willingly* enough that the *Duty* were *done* and *over.* And if we cannot tell how to *engage* in *Duty* with a *guilty Conſcience*; how ſhall we be able to *contend* with *Death* with a *guilty Conſcience*? If the *Preſence* of *God* in *Duty* be ſo *dreadful* and *terrible* unto the *Soul* under the *Apprehenſion* of ſome *known ſin* committed by it and not *pardoned* to it, that it makes it *quake* and *tremble* to come before *him*, what then will the *Preſence* of *God* in *Death* and *Judgment*, when *Conſcience* ſhall be *awakened* to make *terrible Reflections*, not upon a *particular ſin*, but upon the *ſins* of a whole *Life*, if not *Repented* of? Oh with what *horrour* and *amazement*, with what *Conſternation* and *Confuſion* muſt ſuch a *Soul* be filled withal? But now he whoſe *Conſcience* is *clear*, Oh how doth he *Rejoyce* to *draw nigh* to *God*, how *glad* is he to *go up unto the Houſe of the Lord*, as *David* ſpeaks, with what delight doth his *Soul* haſten unto *God* in *Duty*, that it may taſte how *good* the *Lord* is, that *it may ſee the Power and Glory of God, ſo as it hath ſometimes done in his Sanctuary*; O with what *Peace* and *Contentment* of *Mind*, ſhall I ſay? *alas*

theſe are *Expreſſions* of *too low* and *too mean a Signification*, to *repreſent* the *workings* of *ſuch a Soul* towards *God*; rather with what *Joy* and *Rejoying*, with what *Triumph* and *Exultation*, doth ſuch a *Soul* make its *abode* and *ſtay* with *God* in *Duty*, where it enjoys the *ſweet* and *refreſhing Smiles* of his *Countenance*, and ſits under the *delightful Banner* of *his Love*. Thus it is with a *Chriſtian* in *Duty*, that hath a *clear Conſcience*. And if it be thus with him in *Duty*, and *Conſcience* continue to *keep* its *clearneſs* and *inoffenſiveneſs* in an *upright walking* with *God* daily; it cannot be *bad* or *ill* with *ſuch a Soul* at *Death*. A *Conſcience* kept *clean* and *pure* in *Life*, will be *quiet* and *peaceable* in *Death*; nay, let me ſay more, he who hath made it his *care* and *buſineſs* to *walk* continually with a *clear* and *inoffenſive Conſcience* in his *Life*, ſhall *certainly* have much *boldneſs*; yea, and *uſually* a great deal of *Joy* and *Rejoycing* in *Death*; and though the *Devil* may and will *labour* to *diſturb* ſuch a *Soul's Peace* and *Comfort* then; yet a *Conſcience ſprinkled* with the *Blood* of *Chriſt*, ſhall be too hard for him. And what *Conſcience* doth in *God's Name* on good *grounds* upon a *Death-bed*, *God* will *confirm* and *enlarge* to the *Soul's* everlaſting *Comfort* and *Conſolation*, when *Death* ſhall bring it to *appear* before *him*.

Thirdly, Would you be *prepared* for *Death*, get *ſin pardoned*, and *labour* much after the *Aſſurance* of it. *Sin* is the cauſe of *death*, the means by which *Death* came into the *World*; had there been no *ſinning*, there would have been no *dying*: but *ſin* coming into the World, *death* came along with it. *Rom.* 5. 12. *As by one Man ſin entred into the World, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.* By *ſinning* againſt *God*, Man is come under a *neceſſity* of *dying*.

The

The *wages of ſin, ſays the* Apoſtle, is *Death*; my *ſin* is that which *gives Death* its *ſting*; ſo we read 1 *Cor.* 15. *and* 56. *The ſting of Death is ſin.* This is it which gives *Death* its *power*, and makes it ſo *dreadful*; and becauſe of *Guilt* lying on the Soul, makes it *unfit* to *die*. But now where the *Soul* is *ſprinkled* with the *Blood* of *Chriſt*, the *Guilt* of *Sin* taken away by an *Act* of *Pardon* and *Forgiveneſs*, that *Soul* is *prepared* to *receive* and *entertain Death* whenſoever it comes; and though it make not that *Death* ſhall not be, yet it makes that *Death* ſhall not *hurt*, for *Sin* is *pardoned*. *Sin* is that which makes the *Soul* cry out *bitterly* under the *Apprehenſions* of *Death*, and of the *Wrath* of *God*. Oh, that I had *never committed ſuch and ſuch Sins*! Why know, O *pardoned Sinner*, thou haſt thy *wiſh*; for *God* when he *pardons Sin*, makes it to be as if it had *never been committed*. Things *forgotten* are no *more* to us than as if they had *never been*. Why now *ſays God*, *I will forgive their Iniquities, and I will remember their Sins no more*. And doth *God*, O *fearful Soul*, make *thy Sins* to be as if they had *never been* by his *pardoning Grace* and *Mercy*; and ſhall not thy former *fears* of *Sin*, and of *Death* by *Reaſon* of *Sin*, be now as if they had never *been*. Thou need'ſt not *fear*, O *trembling* Soul, that thou ſhalt *ever* be queſtioned again for *thoſe Sins* that *God* hath once *forgiven thee*. God's *Acts* of *Oblivion* can never be *repealed*; for *the Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance*. Guilt binds a *Sinner* over unto *Puniſhment*, no wonder then that an *unpardoned Sinner* who is unfit to *die*, is *afraid* of *Death*; for whenever *Death* comes to ſuch a *Soul*, it comes with a *deadly incurable Sting*. *Death* to an *unpardoned Sinner*, is *Death* with a *witneſs*; for it is *Death* and *Hell* in to the Bargain. But now to a *pardoned Sinner*, let *Death* come

when

when and how it will, he is *prepared* for it, his *Condition* is *ſafe*, he cannot be *miſerable*; *Death* may *kill* him, but it cannot *hurt him*; and therefore what need he *fear* it. Now if you would know the *Safety* and *Happineſs* of your *Condition*, labour for an *Aſſurance* that your *Sins* are *pardoned*. Your *future Happineſs* depends upon the *pardon of Sin*, but your *preſent Comfort* depends upon your *Aſſurance* that *Sin* is *pardoned*. He whoſe *Sins* are *pardoned dies ſafely*, but he who *knows* his *Sins* are *pardoned dies comfortably*. *Pardon* of *Sin* frees from *Condemnation*, but it is *Aſſurance* of *Pardon* that brings *Peace* and *Comfort*. That Man is not ſo ready to *die*, nor in ſuch a *prepared Frame* of *Soul* for *Death* as he ought to be in; who, though his *Sins* are *pardoned*, and thereby he hath a Right and Title unto *Heaven*, yet *walks* in the *dark*, and is at *Uncertainties* whether his *Sins* are *pardoned* or not; for as our *pardon* of *Sin* is *neceſſary* to our *dying happily*, ſo the *Aſſurance* of our *Pardon* is *neceſſary* to our *dying comfortably*. Take a Man that is at a *loſs* and under *Doubts* and *Fears* that his *Sins* are not *pardoned*, if *Death* ſhould come to him while he is *under* thoſe *Doubts* and *Fears*, with what *difficulty* would he make a *ſhift* to *die*? How *hardly* would he be *brought* to it? What *Pretences* and *Excuſes* would he make? Alas, *ſays he*, I know not *where I am*, nor what *Death* will do with *me*; and though I am ſo *ſick* that I cannot *live*, yet I am ſo *afraid* I *dare* not *die*; for I know not whither I *am going*, nor where my *Dwelling* ſhall be for *ever*; whether in *Heaven* or in *Hell*. O what ſhall I do therefore. But now he *whoſe Sins* are not only *pardoned*, but he walks *daily* under the *comfortable Aſſurance* thereof, it being *ſealed* and *witneſſed* to him by the *Spirit* of *God*, which *Spirit* as the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *witneſſeth* with our *Spirits* that we are

the

the *Children* of *God*: If *Death* comes to him he rejoiceth; for, ſaith he, *I know that if my earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle be diſſolved, I have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.* The Sum of all is this; *Pardon* of *Sin* is very *good*, for it is our *Safety*; for they that are *pardoned* ſhall *certainly* be *ſaved*: but to have *Sin* not only *pardoned*, but to have the *Aſſurance* that it is *pardoned*, this is *much better*. For *God* to *love us* ſo as to *pardon* and *accept* us, is the *ground* of our *Hopes* for *Heaven* hereafter: But to have *God manifeſt* his *Love*, and to *aſſure* us that he *loves* us, is our *Heaven* on this ſide *Heaven*. And the more we have of this *Aſſurance*, the *more joyfully* and *comfortably* ſhall we be able to *paſs* through a *dying Hour*.

Fourthly, Would you be *prepared* for *Death*, *labour for Hearts* and *Affections crucified* to the *World*, *and all things here below*. It is *impoſſible* we ſhould ever be *willing* to *leave* the *World*, when *God* calls us hence, till we have firſt *learned* to *uſe* the *World* as if we *uſed* it *not*, 1 *Cor.* 7. and 31. For if our *Affections* are *ſet* upon *worldly Things*, and our *hearts engaged* in an *eager proſecution* of them, it will be as *Death* to us before we *die* to think of *parting* with them; and much more *unwilling* ſhall we be to take our *everlaſting Farewel* of them, when Death comes to us in good earneſt. This is commonly the *Temper*, or rather the *Diſtemper* of moſt Men, the *Delights* and *Accommodations* that *God* affords them for their more *comfortable paſſage* through this *World*, and to *encourage* them with *greater Chearfulneſs* to *ſerve him*; have got ſuch an *Intereſt* in their *Hearts* and *Affections*, that they *prize* and *value* them *above meaſure*. The *Love* of the *World*, and the *things* of the World is *grown* ſo *prevalent* with *many*, that

if

if they might have their *Desires*, they would not *care* for, nor *trouble* themselves with any *other Heaven*, but would be content to live here *always*; saying, Let us *build Tabernacles*; nay, let us have a *continuing City* here: *But, O Lord forgive them, for they know not what they say*: They never *experimentally tasted* the *Excellency* and *Sweetness* of *Heaven*, and *heavenly Things*, and that is the *Reason* they are so in *love* with *Earth* and *earthly Things*. Now what *wonder* is it, that those who *place* their *Happiness* in the *Things* of this *World*, should be *unwilling* to *die*; that the *Thoughts* of *Death* which *parts* them and their *Happiness*, should be *bitter* and *unpleasant*? This now is *naturally* the *Temper* of *all Men*, till *God opens* their *Eyes*, and *discovers* to them more *excellent* Things, even *Things* of a *spiritual* and *divine Nature*, which as they are *more suitable* to their *Souls*, so are they *more durable* and *satisfying*; and having once *tasted* what *present Sweetness*, *Peace* and *Joy* there is in *God*, and in *ways* of *Holiness*, *besides* what is *laid up* for them *hereafter* in *Heaven*; their *Hearts* and *Affections* are now become *dead* to the *World*, and all *worldly Things*, so that they have no *relish* and *savour* of these *Things* upon *their Spirits*: But as St. *Paul* saith of himself, so it may be *said* of *them*; they are now *crucified unto the World*, *and the World is crucified unto them*: The *World sees* no *Glory*, or *Beauty* in *them*, and *they* see as *little* in the *World*. How *easily* now can such *take* their *leaves* of it, when *God* by *Death* calls them to it. *The Apostle tells us*, for his *part* he did *die daily*, 1 *Cor.* 15. and 31. And did we *die daily* in our *Desires* and *Affections* unto the *World*, and the *Things* thereof, it would not be so *hard* for us to *die* when we come to it in *good earnest*. When *Death* comes to a Man whose *natural strength* and

and *vigour* hath been *waſting* and *conſuming* a long time by *lingring Sickneſſes* and *Diſtempers*, his *Death* is not ſo *hard* and *ſtrong*, as that Man's *Death* is, whom a *few day's Sickneſs cuts* off in the midſt of his *ſtrength* and *Vigour*, *Nature* being *ſtrong* in him to *make reſiſtance* againſt it, whereas in the other the *ſtrength* of *Nature* is *waſted* and *conſumed*, and ſo *Death* to *him* is more *eaſie*. So is it here, the *Chriſtian* whoſe *Love* and *Affection* to the *World*, and the *Contentments* of this *preſent Life*, hath for *many years* been *conſuming* and *dying*, will more *freely* and *readily part* with them at *Death*, than he whoſe *Love* and *Affections* are *ſtrongly* and *eagerly bent* upon them; ſuch a one muſt be *rent* and *torn* from them by *force* and *violence* in the *hour* of *Death*. When our *heart's ſet looſe* from all things that are *deſirable* under the *Sun*, and there is nothing upon *Earth* that *inſnares* and *intangles* our *Affections* towards it, one *Difficulty*; yea, and a *great one* too, in our way of *dying* is then *removed*. *Death* will *rend* and *tear* that *heart* that is *glued* in *love* to any thing in this *World*.

Therefore, O *Chriſtian*, as to all thy *worldly Enjoyments*, *poſſeſs* them as if thou *poſſeſſed'ſt* them *not*, *rejoice* in them as if thou *rejoiceds't not*, and *uſe* the *World* as not *abuſing* of it; for the *Faſhion* of the *World paſſeth away*. How *dreadful* will *Death* be to one, who as the *Apoſtle ſaith*, *minds earthly Things*? and how *eaſie* will *Death* be to one, whoſe *Mind* and *Converſation* is in *Heaven*?

It is *good* therefore for us to *conſider*, that we are but *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* here. *Heaven* is the *proper Place* and *Dwelling* for *holy Souls*. Make *proviſion* therefore by a *holy weanedneſs* of *Heart* and *Affections* for your *departure hence*; ſend your *beſt* things to *Heaven* before-hand, that is your *Heart*, your *Love*, your *Delight*, and then

you your ſelves will the more *readily* and *willingly follow* after them.

Fifthly, *Would you be prepared for Death, live every day then as if it were your laſt, doing nothing therein, but what you would be willing to be found doing at Death and Judgment.* He that ſhall *every* day ſeriouſly *conſider* with himſelf, for ought I *know* this may be my *laſt day*: The *ſhadows* of *Death* may *ſtretch* themſelves over *my Life*, before the *ſhadows* of the *Evening* overtake me. I have no *Aſſurance* of my *Life* here, no not for a *moment*. How is it therefore with thee, O *my Soul* as to *Eternity*, what is thy *daily Work* and *Employment*? Is it that wherein if I ſhould meet with *Death* at the *end* of it, I can comfortably give an *Account* thereof unto the *Great God*? If I *knew* this to be my *laſt Day*, would I be thus *employed* as I now am? If not, *why do* I *venture* upon the *doing* of that, which I would be *loath Death* ſhould *find* me a *doing*; ſince I *know* not but *Death* may *overtake* me, before I have *finiſhed* what I am about. Reader, whoever thou art, *poſſibly* thou mayeſt be *guilty* of no very *great miſtake*, if thou ſhouldſt *think* with thy *ſelf*, as *healthful* and as *ſtrong* as now I am, yet there may be ſome *ſecret*, *inviſible Hand* of *Death ſtretched* out towards me, *poſſibly* this *very day* I may feel ſome *Symptoms* and ſome *Fore-runners* of it, ſome *mortal*, *incurable Diſeaſe* may *ſeize* upon me before *Night*, and caſt me upon a *ſick Bed*, which to me may prove a *Death-bed*. Suppoſing now that this were thy *very Caſe*, and that thou hadſt received the *Sentence* of *Death*, though not as *Hezekiah* did, by a *Meſſenger ſent immediately by God unto him*, as he had, but by the *Violence* of ſome *Diſtemper*, *accompanied* with thoſe *Signs* and *Tokens* that *uſually* are and have been *preſages* of *Death* unto others; How then wouldſt thou

ſpend

ſpend thoſe *few* ſmall *Moments* of *Time*, that thou haſt yet left thee on this ſide *Eternity*? How would thy *Thoughts work*? What would thy *Words* and *Diſcourſes* then be? Surely thou wouldſt not be ſo *abominable ſtupid* and *ſecure*, ſo *wretchedly careleſs* and *negligent* of thy *Soul*, and of thy *eternal Intereſt* and *Concerns*, when thy *Soul* is as it were ſitting upon thy *Lips*, and *looking* over into *Eternity*, being *ready* to *take* its *ſudden flight* thither; as to be *plodding* and *contriving* in thy *Thoughts* how to *enjoy* the *Pleaſures*, *Profits* and *Delights* of the *World*, which you now find to be *nothing* but *Vanity* and *Vexation* of *Spirit*; nor yet would you be ſo *deſperately mad* and *bold*, as to ſend then for your *vain* and *wicked Companions*, with whom you have *conſumed* ſo many *Days* and *Years* in *Sin* and *Wickedneſs*, that you and they might now *laugh* and *waſte away* your *laſt Hours*, together alſo. No, *certainly* there is no *reliſh and ſavour* now in any of *theſe Things*, unleſs it be that which is *bitter*; yea ſurely the *Remembrance* thereof will then be more *bitter* to the *Soul* than *Gall* and *Wormwood*. Oh now the *Conſideration* of the *Wants* and *Exigences* of the *Soul* begin to *thruſt* and *force themſelves* into the *Mind* and *Thoughts* of a *Sinner*! O the *ſight* of a *righteous* and a *ſevere Judge*, of a *ſtrict Account*, and of a *dreadful Tribunal*! Oh the *bitter Upbraidings* and *Terrors* of an *accuſing Conſcience*, the *fearful Reflections* upon paſt *Sins*, and the *Expectations* of *future Torments*, the *Fears* and *Thoughts* of theſe Things do now *fill* the *Mind* and *perplex* the *Soul*, and make a *Sinner* cry out, *O what ſhall I now do to be ſaved?* Were you *never* in all your *Lives* by the *Death-bed* of a *careleſs, negligent Sinner*, whoſe *Conſcience* was then *awakened* under *Horrors* and *Deſperation*? If you have not, *others* have; and what hath been

their

their *dying words*? Oh, that *God* would *pardon* their *ſins*; that he would *Sanctifie* and *Save* their *Souls*; that he would *ſpare* them a *little ſpace*; that he would *grant* them a *little time* longer, that they might *recover* their *Strength*, that they might *Repent* of their *Sins*, and *Reform* their *Lives*, or elſe that he would *graciouſly manifeſt* his *Love* and *Favour* to their *Souls*, and *receive* them to his *Mercy*. This is the *Language*, theſe are the *Thoughts* and *Cares* of Men upon a *Sick-bed*, when they ſee *death* coming *near* them, and *ſtaring* them in their *Faces*. And if this were thy *Caſe* and *Condition*, O *Sinner*, that thou didſt now *lie tumbling* and *toſſing* upon a *Sick-bed*, yea upon a *Death-bed*; would not *theſe things* be in thy *mind*? would not the ſame *Thoughts* and *Cares poſſeſs* thy *Soul*, and the ſame *words* and *diſcourſes* fall from thy *Mouth*? why let the ſame *Care*, the ſame *Thoughts*, the ſame *words*, take up ſome *part* of *every day* and *hour* of this *Life* now; for thou *knoweſt* not, but that this *moment* thou art as *near death*, as if thy *Friends* and *Relations*, yea and thy *Phyſicians* alſo *deſpaired* of thy life, and had *given* thee *over* for *dead*. O if we could thus *ſpend* every *day*, as if it were our *laſt*, we ſhould then *hardly* be brought to the doing of any *thing*, but what we would be *willing death* ſhould find us *doing*; and how *exceedingly* would this further our *Preparations* for a *dying hour*.

Sixthly, *He that would be in a readineſs for a dying hour, muſt frequently meditate of his own death and of the death of Chriſt.* To *Meditate* of our own *death*, will make us *Studious* to prepare for it; and to *Meditate* of the *death* of *Chriſt*, will *Arm* us againſt the *Fears* of our own *Deaths*. He that by frequent *Meditations* of his *own death*, and of the *death* of *Chriſt*, hath made *death* familiar

miliar to his *Soul*, is not only *prepared* for *death*, but in a great *meaſure* alſo *freed* from the *fears* of *death*. As to the *conſidering* of our *own death*, the *Scripture* is often in calling upon us to lay the *thoughts* of it to our *hearts*. *Oh that my People were wiſe*, ſays God, *that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end.* And *though a Man lives many years and rejoyces in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkneſs, for they ſhall be many.* Eccle. 11. 8. By *days* of *darkneſs* we are to underſtand *death*, or the *State* of *death* during the *abode* of our *Bodies* in the *dark Grave*, or in the *darkneſs* of the *Grave*. He that frequently *ponders* of his *ways*, will at length be brought to *turn* his *feet* unto *God's Teſtimonies*, as *David* ſpeaks of himſelf. So he that *often thinks* upon *death*, will by the *ſerious thoughts* of it be *ſtirred* up to make ſome *timely preparation* for it, this being the end to which the *Contemplations* of *death* doth *tend*. This is that *Wiſdom* which *Solomon* tells us, the *Living gain* by going often to the *Houſe* of *Mourning*, even ſo to *lay* to *heart* the *thoughts* of *death*, ſo as to make *preparation* for it. It is *ſad*, that the *Goodneſs* and *Mercy* of *God* ſhould *occaſion* our *forgetfulneſs* of him and of our *ſelves*, and yet it is *commonly* ſo with us. When *God lays* his *Afflicting* hand upon us, *eſpecially* under ſome *ſmart ſtroke*; we are then brought to *ſeek God*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *In their Affliction they will ſeek me early.* There is ſome *tendency* in *Afflictions* to make us *mindful* of *God*, and of our *own Intereſt* and *Concerns*, which is the *deſign God* aims at in *Afflicting* us. But when *God* is *pleaſed* to *open* his *hand* towards us, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, and *fill* us with his *Bleſſings*, then we are very *prone* to *forget* both him and our *ſelves*; we *forget God*, becauſe when we are *full*, we are *ready* to *deny God*, and *ſay* who

is

is the *Lord*? and we *forget* our *ſelves*, becauſe we *return* not that *Duty* and *Obedience* which ſuch *Goodneſs* and *Mercy* ſhould *engage* us to. And becauſe the *Streams* of *Mercy* now *run pleaſantly* about us, we *conſider* not how many the *days* of *darkneſs* are that will *overtake* us *ſhortly*, but put far from us the *thoughts* of *death* and the *Grave*; and this is the *Reaſon*, why when *death* comes it finds us ſo *unready* and *unprepared*, and we ſo *troubled* and *diſcompoſed* in our *Spirits*, and under ſo many *fears* and *doubts* as to our *Spiritual* and *Eternal concerns*. Frequently therefore, O *Chriſtian*, make thy *private Retirements*, *Commune* with *thy ſelf alone*, *viſit Death* and the *Grave* in thy *thoughts*; take a *walk* now and then in the *Valley* of the *Shadow* of *Death*, ſuffer not thy *thoughts* to be *eſtranged* from ſuch *Meditations*: If thou findeſt thy *ſelf ſhy* and *unwilling* to *engage* in ſuch a *work*, yet bring thy *heart* to it, *inure* thy ſelf to the *thoughts* of *Death* in general, and of thine own *death* in *particular*. And that thou mayeſt not be afraid of it, to the *Meditation* of thine *own death*, joyn the *Conſideration* of the *death* of *Chriſt*, who hath *Conquered death*, took away its *Sting*. By *dying* he *ſlew death*, was the *death* of *death*, as it was *Propheſied* of him, in *Hoſea* 13. 14. *O Death I will be thy Plagues*, *O Grave I will be thy Victory*. He now that by *Faith* in the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* is *intereſted* in his *death*, may *ſay*, when ever the *time* of his *departure* comes; *thanks* be to *God* through *Chriſt*, I am *ready* and *prepared* for it. Muſe therefore much upon the *Death* of *Chriſt*, for herein lies thy *ſupport* and *comfort*, O *Soul*, againſt thine own *Death*.

Seventhly, *He that would be prepared for death muſt labour for an aſſurance of a better life, always living by Faith in the Contemplation of the Glory and*

and Happineſs of Heaven. He that is *aſſured* of an *Eternal Life* in *Heaven*, need not, nay will not *much* fear a *Temporal death* here upon *Earth*. Chriſtians, the *time* is *coming* when you and all *things* and *perſons* in this *World* muſt take your *leaves* one of another and *part* for *ever*; what then, *O Chriſtian*, will bear up thy *Spirit* at ſuch a *time*? why nothing leſs than the *ſenſe* and *hopes* of the *love* of *God*, and of thy *Intereſt* in *Chriſt*, ſome *Evidences* of a *work* of *Grace* upon thy *Soul*, which is an *earneſt* and *foretaſte* of *Heaven* and *Glory*: Theſe are the only things that will bear up thy *Soul* in a *dying hour*. When a Man hath *attained* to ſome well grounded *Aſſurance* of his *Intereſt* in *God* and *Chriſt*, and thereby of his *Right* and *Title* unto *Heaven*, then are things in a *good poſture* with him, and he in a *readineſs* for *Death* and the *Grave*: And how *light* will that *Soul* make of *death*, that hath the *aſſured hopes* of *Heaven* and *Glory* to *encourage* him to go through it? He that by *Faith* lives in the *daily Contemplations* of the *Glory* and *Happineſs* of *Heaven*, walking in the *Light of God's Countenance*, and is *able* to ſay, *I know that my Redeemer lives*, and that *when this Earthly Tabernacle of his Body ſhall be diſſolved into duſt, that he hath a Building of God, an Houſe not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens*, which *death* will bring him unto, and this is all the *hurt death* can do him; he that hath *ſuch* an *Aſſurance* as this is, cannot but *welcome death*, and *embrace* it not only with *Contentment*, but with *Delight* and *Joy*, and even then when his *Soul* is *ſtruggling* and *ſtriving* to get looſe from his *Body*, with what *Holy Longing* and *vehemency* of *deſire* will he *cry* out and ſay, *come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of willingneſs and unwillingneſs to Die. Difference between Chriſtians in reference unto Death. Whether it be lawful to deſire Death. In what caſes it may, and in what not. A willingneſs to Die may be even in Wicked Men, and ſometimes they may Die peaceably and quietly, though Death is never comfortable and happy to them. In the Beſt there may be an unwillingneſs to Die, though a Saint, as a Saint, is always deſirous of Death. Reaſons that ſhould encourage the People of God always to be willing to Die. Believers ſhould not only deſire to Die, but they ſhould long for Death.

DEath in it ſelf is not deſirable, nor can it be; *Nature* not only ſhuns, but abhors it; nor is it poſſible that *Nature* ſhould be reconciled to that which ſeeks its *Annihilation* and *Deſtruction*, as *Death* doth: And accordingly as theſe *Fears* are either ſtrengthened and increaſed by *Sin* and *Guilt*, or conquered and overcome by *Grace*, ſo are we more or leſs enclined towards, or averſe from *Death*. To be willing to *Die*, when *God* calls us to it, is a thing greatly to be deſired, and argues no ſmall attainment in *Grace*, when we do it upon good grounds: And yet ſometimes to be unwilling to *Die* is not to be condemned as evil and ſinful. To be willing to *Die*, that we may be with *Chriſt*, when

when *God* calls us to it, is a frame of *Soul*, in which the *People* of *God* ſhould always be deſirous to be found; but yet to be deſirous to *Live*, when either the *Great Work* of a *Chriſtian* is not finiſhed, or when his *Life* may tend to the *Glory* of *God* and the *Good* of his *Church*, is that which is not ſinful or unlawful; we may ſee this *Truth* both in *David* and *Hezekiah*; in *David* in *Pſal.* 6. 4, 5. *Deliver my Soul, O Lord, ſpare me for thy Mercy-ſake, for in Death there is no remembrance of thee.* *David* at this time being troubled in *Mind*, under the apprehenſions of *God's Wrath*, and ſo wanting the aſſurance of his *Love*, as you may read in the *Pſalm*, prays that he might be *ſpared*. And ſo *Hezekiah*, *Iſai.* 38. 2. prays for a *longer time of Life*; as for other *Reaſons*, ſo for this as one, becauſe having begun a *Reformation in the Church of God*, he was deſirous to *live*, that he might carry it on farther to the *Glory* of *God* and the *Good* of his *Church*. A *Chriſtian* ought ſo to *live*, not only as to be prepared for *Death*, but ſo as to be willing to *die*; but yet he is a *true Chriſtian*, who though he doth not *die* ſo willingly, yet *dies* preparedly; he that *dies* preparedly and willingly, *dies* moſt comfortably; but yet he that *dies* preparedly, *dies* ſafely and happily.

In reference unto *Death*, there is a great difference between *Nominal Chriſtians* and *Real Chriſtians*; and alſo between one *true Chriſtian* and *another*. There is a difference in reference unto *Death*, between thoſe that are called *Chriſtians*, but yet are not *truly* ſo: Some there are whoſe *Conſciences* are ſo *awakened* upon a *Death-bed*, ſetting their *Sins* before their *Faces* with ſuch horrible bloody *Circumſtances*, and withal repreſenting the *Wrath* of *God*, and the *Everlaſting Torments* of *Hell*, as due unto them for their *Sins*, that they *cry* out in *Horrour*

Horrour and *Deſpair*, their *Sins* are greater than can be forgiven; and feeling a *Hell* in their *Conſciences* here, they *die* under *Deſperation* of ever *eſcaping Hell* hereafter, or of obtaining *Mercy* and *Pardon* from *God*: This was the caſe of *Judas*, who under *Horrours* of *Conſcience*, *deſpairing* of *Mercy*, *endeavours* to *eaſe* his *Conſcience*, by laying violent hands upon himſelf, and is, as the *Scripture* ſaith, *gone to his own place*. Others there are, who though they would be called *Chriſtians*, yet are not ſo indeed; but yet are ſo bold and confident in *Death*, that *Heaven* is theirs, as if they were in the *poſſeſſion* of it already; Our *Lord* tells us of ſome, in *Luke* 13. 25. who had ſuch ſtrong *preſumptions* of *Heaven*, that with a confident boldneſs they knock at *Heaven*'s Gate, crying, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; as if there were no more to be done, but only the opening of the *door*, and letting them into *Heaven*; but you know what *Anſwer* our *Lord* returns them, *I know you not, depart from me, ye Workers of Iniquity*. Both theſe ſorts of *Perſons*, the *deſpairing Sinner*, and the *preſumptuous Sinner*, are alike *miſerable* in their *Death*, though they differ vaſtly from true and real *Chriſtians*; for they *die* neither happily nor comfortably; for they *die* under the *guilt* of their *Sins*, and ſo *periſh* for ever, which no *true Chriſtian* doth. And as *Hypocrites* and *ſincere Chriſtians* differ in their *Death*; ſo alſo do *true* and *real Chriſtians* differ in the manner of their *dying*; ſome when they come to lie upon their *Death-beds*, *God* is *pleaſed* to withdraw the *light* of his *Countenance* and the *manifeſtations* of his *Love* and *Favour* from them; and in their apprehenſions God ſeems to have caſt them off, and will be favourable to them no more; and though their *Life* draws *nigh to the Grave*, yet their *Soul* is full of *trouble*; they are ſo in the *dark*, and can ſee no

light,

light, in ſuch a *State* of *deſertion*, that *God* ſeems to have forſaken them, their *Sun* is as it were *ſetting* in a *Cloud*; and in this *State* of *diſmal darkneſs* they *die*, not knowing what ſhall become of their *Souls* for ever; which yet go ſafely to *Heaven*, being buiſt upon the *Rock of Ages*, the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, against which the *Gates* of *Death* and *Hell* ſhall never *prevail*. Some again there are who though they are *true Chriſtians*, yet are *weak Chriſtians*; though they have the *Grace of God in Truth*, yet they have it not in that *growth* and *ſtrength* that ſome have; their *Faith* is true, but they are not ſtrong in *Faith*; they love the *Lord Jeſus* in *ſincerity*, but not with that *fervour* and *ardour* that ſome do; they have a *good Hope* towards *God*, but their *Hope* is not *lively* and *operative*: Such *Chriſtians* as theſe now, though they *take Death patiently*, yet they *would willingly live*; they go indeed when *God* by *Death* calls for them, but they could wiſh that it would *pleaſe God* to *ſtay* for them a little *longer*; they have ſome *good Hopes* of *Heaven* when they *die*, but they deſire a little more time to *live* here upon *Earth*; they *love God* more than all *Things* and *Perſons* whatſoever, but yet their *affections* are not ſo fully taken off from the *World*, nor from their *Friends* and *Relations* as they ſhould be; they are not *wrack'd* and *tormented* with *perplexing fears* of *Wrath* and *Hell*, but yet they are not *raviſh'd* with the *Joys* of *Heaven*. Concerning the *Death* of ſuch as theſe, we muſt ſay, *Bleſſed are they that thus die in the Lord*; for though they have not that *aſſurance* that ſome have, and ſo *die* not ſo *comfortably* as to *ſenſe* and *feeling* as they do; yet have they that *Faith* and *Affiance* in the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, whereby they *die happily*: But then there are *others* that are *ſtrong Chriſtians*, grown Men in *Chriſt*, who have attained unto ſuch a *full*

assurance of *Faith*, that they are not only *willing* to *die*, but are *desirous* of *Death*, being *perswaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor length, nor depth, nor any Creature, shall ever be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus*: for they know in whom they have *believed*, and with whom they have intrusted the *everlasting Concernments* of their *Immortal Souls*; and that he is *able* and *faithful*; yea, and *will also keep that good thing that they have committed unto him unto that day*. And therefore they can with a *Holy Triumph* through Christ say, *O Death where is thy sting, O Grave where is thy Victory; thanks be to God who hath given us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Wherefore they can with *chearfulness* commit one *half* of *themselves*, that is, their *Bodies*, unto the *Grave*, where though they *know* it shall turn to *Corruption* and *Rottenness*; yet that troubles them not; because they know also that by the *Power* of *God* it shall be raised up a most *Glorious Body* at the last Day; for they are assured that their *Redeemer lives*, and they believe that *he shall stand at the last day upon the Earth*; and not only so, but because he *lives* they believe that they shall *live* also: And though for the present *Worms destroy their Bodies*, yet in their *Flesh* they shall *see God*; whom they shall see for themselves, and their *Eyes* shall behold him, and not *anothers*, and that to their everlasting *Joy* and *Comfort*. Now to such as these, *Death* is both happy and comfortable also; and therefore they are *desirous to be dissolved, and to be with Christ which is best of all.*

But

But now a *Queſtion* may ariſe here: Is it not Lawful to *deſire*, or *wiſh* for *Death*?

To this I *Anſwer*, negatively, and poſitively: in ſome *caſes* it is *unlawful* and *ſinful*, and in ſome *caſes* it may be *lawful* and *commendable*.

Firſt, *negatively*, wherein it is *ſinful* and *unlawful*. *And ſo for any to wiſh for, or to deſire Death through impatience or diſcontent in any condition, becauſe they cannot have their own Wills; but are croſt in their deſires, this is ſinful*: This was the *Sin* of *Jonah*, who becauſe *God* had ſmitten the *Gourd* from which he received ſome *refreſhment*, preſently he falls into a *Paſſion*, and in a *diſcontented fit* he concludes the matter, *that it was better for him to die than to live*, Jonah 4. 8. but *God* knew it was better for him to *live* than to *die*; and therefore in his *pity* he ſpares him that he might *repent* of his *Sin*. This was the *Infirmity* of *Eliah*, which the *Apoſtle* ſeems to take *notice* of, when he tells us, *He was a Man of like Infirmities with us*, Jam. 5. 17. for as to any other *Infirmities* of that *Holy Man*, the *Scripture* is *ſilent*, but it takes *notice* of this, that when he was *perſecuted* by *Jezabel's Cruelties* and *fled* for his *Life*, under *fear* and *infidelity*, in 1 Kings 19. and 24. he cry'd out, It is *enough*, *O Lord, now take away my Life, for I am no better than my Fathers*. Theſe *fits* of *paſſion* and *diſcontent* are *ſinful*, and not to be *juſtified*; and yet how frequent is it for Men thus to vent their *diſcontents* when any *trouble* befalls them, that croſſeth their *Wills*; preſently nothing will ſerve their turns but *Death*: O that they were *Dead*. I will not ſay what once I heard ſpoken to be always true in this *caſe*; that ſuch *Perſons* by wiſhing for *Death*, wiſh

for *Hell* and *Damnation* with it; I dare not say so, least I should *offend* against the *Generation* of the *Righteous*: But this I will say, that there are many *wicked prophane wretches*, who when something doth *cross* and *vex* them, instantly cry out, *Oh that they were dead!* to whom, if *God* should not be more *merciful* to their *Souls*, than they themselves are to their *Bodies*, but take them at their *word*, and presently *strike* them *dead*, it may be feared he must also by *striking* their *Bodies* into the *Grave*, *smite* their *Souls* into *Hell*; they allowing themselves no space and time for their *Repentance*. O that such *Persons* would seriously consider what they do when they *wish* such an *End* may befall them.

Again, to *wish for Death absolutely is sinful, though we are under pains that are more painful than Death it self*. *Nature* puts us upon desiring to *live*, and *Grace* should put us upon desiring to *live*, because *God* wills it, though we be under *sore afflictions*; for as it is our *Holiness* to do the *will* of *God* while we *live*, so it is our *Holiness* to be content to *live*, while we suffer according to his *will*. To desire *Death*, because our *lives* are full of *troubles*, is a sinful *wish* or *desire*; for *God* may, and often hath as much use of our *lives*, when we are in an *afflicted condition*, as when we are in a *prosperous condition*; a *sickly Body*, yea a *sick Bed*, may bring as much *Glory* to *God*, as a *healthful Constitution*; and we may do as much *service* when we are *bound* in *Chains* and in a *Prison*, as when we *enjoy* the *greatest Freedom* and *Liberty*. *Passive Obedience* brings as much *Honour* to *God* as *Active* doth. When you *lie* under any *troubles* therefore, wish not for *Death*; beg of *God* rather that he would *remove* those *Evils* from you, than *remove*

you

you from thoſe *Evils*: *God* hath a *thouſand ways* to let us out of *trouble*, though he doth not *open* the *door* of the *Grave* to let us in *thither*. Pray that your *Afflictions* may be *ſanctified*, and that your *Spirits* may be raiſed up above your *troubles* while you *live*, and ſeek not, nor *deſire freedom* from them by *Death*: For a *Chriſtian* to bear a *burden* well, is more *deſireable* than to be *delivered* from it; eſpecially, if while we are *ſuffering* our *ſelves*, we are doing *good* unto *others*. A *Chriſtian* ſhould be *contented*; yea, he ſhould *rejoice* in *ſuffering Evils* that *lie* upon, when he doth *good* thereby unto others. He that is of a *gracious publick Spirit* will *triumph over Perſonal Troubles* and *Afflictions*, ſo long as he *ſees God making uſe of him as a help or bleſſing to the publick*: And though he *longs* to *die* for himſelf, knowing it will be much to his *Advantage*, becauſe when he departs hence he ſhall be *with Chriſt*, which is far better; yet he ſhould be *unwilling* to *die*, ſo long as he can ſay with St. *Paul*, that for him to *abide in the Fleſh is and will be more needful for others*. To be willing to deferr our *Glory* and *Happineſs* for a time, that *God* may be *glorified*, and others *benefited* by us here, is an *excellent frame* of *Spirit* in any *Chriſtian*.

Secondly, *poſitively*, it is *lawful* in *ſome caſes* to *deſire Death*. And thus none but a *true Chriſtian* can truly *deſire to die*. Now there are *three caſes* in which it may be *lawful* for *a Chriſtian to deſire Death*.

Firſt, *When God brings a Chriſtian into ſuch a condition, as that he may bring God more Honour and Glory by his Death, than by his Life*: In ſuch a *caſe* it is *lawful* to *deſire Death*; and this was the *caſe* of *Sampſon*, who was a *Type* of *Chriſt*: The *Philiſtines* having brought him into a *low* and *ſuffering condition*, though partly through his own

Sin; yet being animated by the *Spirit* of *God*, and knowing that by his *Death* he should destroy many of the *Enemies* of *God*, he begs *strength* from him thereunto, which *God* in an *extraordinary* manner granted him; for he took hold of the Pillars of the House, and so pulled down the House upon himself and upon the *Philistines*, slaying thereby more at his *Death* than he did in all his *Life*. This was the *case* of many of the *Martyrs*, who being called to *suffer* for the *Truth*, were very desirous to *die*, knowing that their *Death* would tend more to the *Glory* of *God* than their *Life*, and therefore they willingly and chearfully sealed to the *Truth* of God with their *Blood*.

Secondly, *It is lawful to wish for Death, that we may be free from offending of God.* *Sin* is a miserable *Thraldom* and *Bondage* unto a *Child* of *God*; to have a *Nature* within him that is continually inclining him unto, and putting him upon that which is *sinful* and *provoking* unto *God*, is that which a *Holy Soul* cannot tell how to *bear*. Oh to find a *Law* in his *Members* always *warring* against the *Law* of his *Mind*, and leading him *Captive* to the *Law of Sin and Death*! It is that which makes his *Life* burthensome to him. This I know *works* little upon *wicked Men*; for when they are acting of *Sin* they are in their *Element*; but to a *Gracious Soul*, unto whom the *loving kindness of God*, as *David* speaks, is better than *Life*, to such a one a *sinful impure Nature*, whereby he offends and displeaseth *God*, is more bitter than *Death*; and therefore he is continually making out after that *State*, wherein he shall be *without Sin*; while he is here he knows he cannot be free from all *Sin*; but yet he follows after it; if he may apprehend that for which he is apprehended of *Christ Jesus*; and therefore

fore *forgetting the things* that are *behind*, he *reacheth forth unto those things that are before, pressing forward towards the mark* for the *price* of the *High Calling* of *God* in *Christ Jesus*, if by any means he may attain to the *Resurrection* of the *Dead*; that is, to that *State* of *perfect Holiness*, and *freedom* from *Sin*, which he shall arrive to at the *Resurrection* of the *Dead*. And because he sees he cannot but *Sin* whilst he is here, and that *dying* only will be the end of *Sinning*; therefore he *longs* for *Death*, that he may come to an end of *Sinning*.

Thirdly, *It is lawful to wish for Death, that we may come to the full and perfect enjoyment of God and Christ in Glory.* In this frame of *Spirit* we find the *Apostle*, when he crys out in that *Holy Agony*, *I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.* The *Scripture* it self makes it the *Character* of a *true Christian*, that he is one that loves the appearing of *Christ*, and this is that which cannot be enjoyed without *Death*; now that which we *love* we *wish* the enjoyment of, and consequently we *desire* to *use* those *means* that tend thereunto. Our *Lord* himself, in *Joh.* 17. prays for all *Believers*, that they might be where he is, that they might behold and enjoy his *Glory*; and hath taught us to pray that the *Kingdom* of *God* might come; by which is meant not only the *Kingdom* of *Grace*, but the *Kingdom* of *Glory* also. And indeed *true love* unto *Christ* will put us upon *desiring* to be with him; for that is the *property* of *true love*, always to manifest an ardent and strong desire after the enjoyment of its *beloved Object*. If now a *Christian*, who hath *enjoyed Communion* with *God* in his *Ordinances*, desires the *sincere milk* of the *Word* that he may grow thereby: And if that *Soul* that hath *tasted* how *Good* and *Gracious* the *Lord* is in any *Duty*, is ready to cry

out with *David*, in the 42 *Psalm*, *As the Heart panteth after the Water Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God*; my *Soul* is *athirst* for *God*, for the *living God*, when shall I *come* and *appear before God*, that he may see his *Power* and his *Glory*, so as he hath seen him in the *Sanctuary*. If a *Christian* now so much desires the *enjoyment* of *God* in his *Ordinances*, wherein there is always a mixture of *Sin* and *Pollution* going along with them; should he not, doth he not much *more* then desire the *enjoyment* of *God* in *Heaven*? where there shall be a a *perfect freedom* from all *Sin*, and all *sinful mixtures*, that here are a *continual grief* to a *Gracious Soul*, and a *just provocation* to a *Holy God*; where he *shall be* for *ever with the Lord, beholding* the *beauty* of his *Face*, and being *fully satisfied* and *delighted* with the *enjoyment* of his *presence*, in *whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore.*

But though it may be *lawful* to *wish* for, or to *desire Death*, when we may *thereby* bring *Glory* to *God*, when we may *thereby* be *free* from *Sin*, and come to the *perfect enjoyment* of *God* and *Christ* in *Glory*; yet in all these *cases*, we must take in these *Cautions*, that for the *time* of our *Death*, we must still *refer* our selves to the *good will* and *pleasure* of *God*: For though it may be *lawful* to *wish* for *Death*, when we may thereby *glorifie God*; yet we must not *absolutely wish for Death* so, because *our Hearts* are very *treacherous*, and may easily *impose* upon us and *deceive* us herein. And though to *wish* for *Death* that we may be *freed* from *Sin*, is a *holy wish*; yet we must not *wish that absolutely neither*, but must herein refer our selves to the *pleasure of God*, how long he will have us to *conflict* with our *Lusts* and *Corruptions*, bearing about with us a *Body* of *Sin* and *Death*. And though it be a

holy

holy wiſh, to *deſire* to *die* that we may *enjoy God* and *Chriſt* in *Glory*; yet muſt we not *wiſh for that abſolutely*; for though the *Holy Apoſtle* deſired to be *diſſolved and to be with Chriſt*; yet was he in a *ſtrait*, and what to *chooſe*, he tells us he *wiſt* not, and we know how he qualifies and debates the buſineſs; and what the *iſſue* came to, you may read in 1 *Phil.* 21. 22, 23. Still therefore in all *our deſires* after *Death* in general; yet as to the *particular time* when, we muſt always *ſay*, Not our *Wills*, but thy *Will*, O *Lord*, *be done*.

This *holy deſire* of *Death*, now is that which can only be found in the *Godly*; for they only can *deſire Death* upon *good grounds*; but yet there may be a a *willingneſs* to *die* even in *Wicked Men*, and ſometimes they may *die peaceably and quietly*, though *Death* is never *comfortable* and *happy* to them. That they may *ſometimes die willingly and peaceably* is often ſeen; they may have no bands in their *Death* as others have, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, but their *ſtrength* is *firm*; they are not under *troubles* and *diſquietments* becauſe of their *Sins*, and the *Wrath of God*; *Conſcience* doth not fly in their *Faces*, by *terrible reflections* upon their *former wicked Lives*; God doth not make them *poſſeſs* their *Sins* in the bitterneſs of their *Souls*; and as for the *Devil* he will not *vex* and *trouble* them, that is not for his *Advantage*: for he knows while they are under a *ſpirit* of *ſecurity* and *ſenſeleſsneſs* he hath them *faſt enough*, and therefore he will not *Torment* them before their *time*, leſt they ſhould get out of his *Clutches*: But all is very *quiet* and *peaceable* as to *outward appearance*, and they *die*, as it is commonly expreſſed by ignorant *Perſons*, as *quiet* as a *Lamb*: This may be the *State and Condition of a Wicked Man* upon a *Death-Bed*; he may *die* quietly without any *doubting*

ing upon his *Spirit*, as to his *Eternal State*, as if all were *well* and should be *well* with him for ever; not that his *Sins* are pardoned and *God* reconciled; nor that his *Conscience* hath not wherewith to *trouble* him, because it is *silent*; no the *Worm* of *Conscience* is *Hungry*, and hath *matter enough* to *Torment* him in *Hell* to *Eternity*, but it is not *permitted* to *prey* and *feed* upon the *Sinner* as yet: This *peace* and *quietness* that he now *enjoys* is not from any *knowledge* of his *good Estate*, but from his *Ignorance* how *bad* his *State* is; he sees not the *Wrath* of *God* hanging over his Head, nor the *Justice* of *God* set in opposition against him; and therefore he goes on quietly to his *Grave*. As all the *trouble* and *disquietness* of a *Godly Man* in *Death*, is because he is *ignorant* of the *goodness* of his *State* and *Condition*; so the *quietness* and *peace* of a *Wicked Man* in *Death*, is because he is *ignorant* of the *badness* of his *State* and *Condition*. If a *Godly Man dies* under *fears* and *troubles*, it is not because his *State* is not *good*, but because he knows not that his *State* is *good*: And if a *wicked Man dies* in *peace*, it is not because his *State* is not *bad*, but because he knows not that his *State* is *bad*. Did a *Godly Man* know the *goodness* of his *State* and *Condition*, his *troubles* and *fears* would soon be turned into *joy* and *rejoicings*: And did a *Wicked Man* know the *badness* of his *State* and *Condition*, his *peace* and *quietness* would soon be turned into *mourning* and *lamentation*; and though now *Friends* and *Acquaintance*, yea, his *own Heart*, and *Satan* also may *flatter* him; yet *Death* will open his *Eyes* and *undeceive* him, and then he shall know for ever by sad *experience*, the *Truth* of that *Scripture*, in the 57 of *Esay* last verse, *There is no Peace, saith the Lord, unto the Wicked.*

Now,

Now, as a *Wicked Man* may *die willingly*; yea, *peaceably*; ſo in a *Godly Man* there may be ſometimes an *unwillingneſs* to *die*, though a *Godly Man*, *acting* as a *Godly Man* ought, he is always *deſirous* of *Death*. That there may be in the *beſt* of *God's Children*, an *unwillingneſs to die*, the *Scripture* is clear: Thus was it with the *Prophet*, *Jer.* 37. 20. Now *I pray thee, O my Lord the King, let my ſupplication be accepted before thee, that thou cauſe me not to return* to the *Houſe* of *Jonathan* the *Scribe*, leaſt I *die* there. And *our Lord*, *forewarning Peter* of the *manner* of his *Death*, tells him that he ſhould be *carried* whither *he would not*, *John* 21. 18. It is with many of the *People* of *God*, as it was with *Lot*, who though his Righteous Soul was vexed *day* by *day*, by beholding the *unclean converſation* of the *Sodomites*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 18. Yet O how he lingred when *God* would have taken him from thence? as you may ſee, *Gen.* 19. 16. So is it with many of the *Saints* of *God*, who while they *live* in this *World*, are always *vexed*, not only with the *corruptions* of their own *Hearts*, but alſo with the *wickedneſs* of the *times*; yet are they if not *unwilling*, yet not ſo *willing* to leave the *World* as they ſhould be; but this *unwillingneſs* of theirs *proceeds* not from the want of *Grace*, but from the weakneſs of their *Grace*. In the beſt of *God's Children* there is *Fleſh* as well as *Spirit*; *Sin* and *Corruption* as well as *Grace*; and if at any time *Sin* and *Corruption* prevail over *Grace*, as ſometimes they do, no wonder if they be *unwilling* to *die*. Thoſe of the *People* of *God* that do *believe*, do yet *believe* but in part; and though the *Spirit* be ready in them, yet the *Fleſh* is weak: But though there be ſome *unwillingneſs* in the *beſt* to *die*; yet they know and are ſenſible, that it is their *Sin* and *fault*; they know they ought to be willing to *die*, and even in this

their *Spirits* in them *ſtrive* againſt this *weakneſs* of the *Fleſh*, and in the end they *conquer* their *fears*, and *overcome* their *backwardneſs* and *unwillingneſs* to *die*; according to that *Gracious Promiſe* in *Pſal.* 29. 11. the *Lord will give ſtrength unto his People, the Lord will bleſs his People with Peace.* The *Nature* of *Grace* is ſuch, that it will work it ſelf through all *fears* and *doubts*, both as to *Sin* and *Death*: And when once the *Eye* of a *Chriſtian's Faith* is opened to look within the *vail*, and to diſcover ſomething of the *Glory* and *Happineſs* of *Heaven*, and of the *Soul's intereſt* therein, nothing then ſatisfies ſuch a *Soul*, but to be abſent from the *Body*, and to be preſent with the *Lord*. A *Godly Man*, acting as a *Godly Man*, is one that is *always deſirous* of *Death*, becauſe he knows the *day* of his *Death* will not only be *better* to him than the *day* of his *Birth*, but *better* alſo than any *day* of his *Life*.

Now that the *People* of *God* may always be willing to *die*, there are *ſeveral Arguments* that ſhould encourage them unto it; and I ſhall but name a few in *general*.

Firſt, the *Afflictions* and *Diſtreſſes that the People of God are Subject to in this World, and that above others, may be one Reaſon to encline them to a willingneſs to die*; not out of a *diſcontented mind*, becauſe they are *weary* of, or *impatient* under their *ſufferings*: This was the *Sin* of *Moſes*, *Numb.* 11. 15. when he prayed unto God, *if thou deal thus with me, I pray thee kill me out of hand, if I have found favour in thy ſight, and let me not ſee my wretchedneſs*: This is a *great Sin* in the *Wicked*, and ſometimes an *Infirmity* that the *Godly* fall into; but the *Scripture* allows it not in any. *Faith* and *Patience* under

under the *afflicting hand* of *God* is very *becoming* a *Chriſtian*, but *Impatience* and *Diſcontent* is to be *abominated*. Though a *Chriſtian* knows that it is *better* for him to *die* than to live; yet out of a *Fit* of *Impatience* and *Diſcontent*, becauſe of *Affliction*, we ought not *preſently* to wiſh for *Death*. St. *Paul* knew it was *far better* for him to *die* than to *live*: He tells us ſo *Phil.* 1. 21. yet durſt not he *deſire* it *abſolutely*, though a Man *ſubject* to *many* and *great Afflictions*; but was in a *ſtrait* what to do, as *himſelf* ſaith, and therefore *ſubmits* himſelf to the *Will* of *God*. Yet is it not utterly *unlawful* for a *Chriſtian* to *deſire Death* that he may be *free* from the *Miſeries* of this *Life*, becauſe theſe Things *occaſion* the drawing forth of *Sin* and *Corruption*, whereby *God* is *diſhonoured*, his *Spirit diſcompoſed*, that he cannot *ſerve God* with that *Freedom* and *Chearfulneſs* of Soul, as he *might* and as he *deſires*. Every day a *Chriſtian* muſt look for *Croſſes* and *Afflictions*, *and ſufficient to every day are the Evils thereof*, *Luke* 9. 23. And therefore a *Chriſtian* may upon good grounds *deſire* to be *looſed* from thoſe *Miſeries* and *Afflictions*, if it be the *will* of *God*: But in the mean time till he can have his *deſires* in this *Caſe*, let him in *patience poſſeſs* his *Soul*.

Secondly, *Another Reaſon that may make the People of God willing to die, may be in reſpect of the wicked, that they may not be always Spectators of thoſe abominable Wickedneſſes, whereby God is daily diſhonoured, his Name blaſphemed.* This made *Rebekah* deſirous of *Death*; for when *Eſau* had taken *ungodly Wives*, it is ſaid they were a *grief* of *Mind* to *Iſaac* and *Rebekah*, becauſe they knew that *God* was *greatly diſhonoured* thereby; therefore ſays *Rebekah* unto *Iſaac*, *I am weary of my life, becauſe of the Daughters of Heth; and if Jacob take a Wife*

a Wife among them, ſuch as thoſe that are of the Daughters of the Land, what good will my life do me, Gen. 27. 46. O who can *expreſs* what *grief* it is to thoſe that *fear God*, to *live* in the *midſt* of a *wicked* and *ungodly Generation*, that are *continually* provoking *God* by their *wicked lives*? What *godly Man's heart* can but *bleed*, to *hear* the *Name* of *God rent* and *torn* by *curſed Oaths* and *Helliſh Blaſphemies*, to behold the *Uncleanneſs*, the *Drunkenneſs*, the *Lying*, the *ſcoffing* at *Godlineſs*, the *corrupt*, *filthy*, *ſcurrilous*, *idle Talking* that overflows in all *Places*; ſo that thoſe that *fear God* had better be any where almoſt than in the *Company* of moſt Men? This was a *grief and vexation* to the *Soul* of *righteous Lot*; for in *ſeeing* and *hearing* the *filthy Converſation* of thoſe *wicked Sodomites*, they *vexed* his *righteous Soul* from *day* to *day* by their *unlawful Deeds*. This made the *Prophet David* cry out, in *Pſalm* 120. 5, 9. *Woe is me that I ſojourn in Meſech, and dwell in the Tents of Kedar.* No *wonder* therefore that thoſe whoſe *Souls* are affected with the *diſhonour* of *God*, are *deſirous* to *depart* out of this *World*, and cry out, *Oh that they had the wings of a Dove, for then would they flee away and be at reſt.*

Thirdly, *Another thing that may make the People of God willing to die, is freedom from the Temptations of Satan.* The *Devil* is the great *Enemy* of *Mankind*; *miſerable* he is himſelf, and *envies* that any ſhould be otherwiſe than himſelf is; and therefore he makes uſe of all his *Craft* and *Subtilties* againſt Man. And herein *Chriſtians* are much *endangered*, and hereby he *frequently* *manageth* his *Temptations* with *Succeſs*; for many are his *Wiles* and *Devices* that he makes uſe of to *draw* the *People* of *God* into *Sin*. What *unwearied Aſſaults* from

Satan

Satan do many *Chriſtians* labour under, not only for *Days* and *Weeks*, but for *Months* and *Years*, whereby he *allures* and *enticeth* them with *reſtleſs Importunities* to the *Commiſſion* of ſome *Sin* or other, which they are no more able to *fly* from, than they are to *out-run* themſelves? Now to any that have *taſted* the *Sweetneſs* of *Holineſs*, what can be more *bateful* than *daily Inſtigations* to *Sin*? And to ſuch, who *underſtand* the *Bleſſedneſs* of *Communion* with *God*; what can be more *bitter*, than to find themſelves *chain'd* as it were to a *Devil*, who makes ſuch *Applications* of *vile Objects* to their *Fancies* continually, that they cannot in the leaſt turn themſelves from? Oh *how irkſome* muſt it needs be to a *gracious Heart*, to be *always haunted* with the *Spectacle* and *Image* of ſome *Sin*, even as *black* as *Hell*? Now this being the *Caſe* of the *People* of *God*, to be *unceſſantly* followed with the *Temptations* of *Satan*; how *willing* ſhould they be to *die*, becauſe never till then ſhall they be out of the *reach* of his *fiery Darts*? For as it is in *Heaven* only that there is no *Sin*, ſo it is in *Heaven* only that there ſhall be *no Temptations* unto *Sin*.

Fourthly, *Another thing that may make the People of God always willing to die, is a perfect freedom from all Sin.* While they are here they *ſin*, and are in continual *danger* of *falling* from *God*; and no Man can tell how *far* any of them may *fall*; for though it be *admitted* that they cannot *fall totally* and *finally*, yet they may *fall dreadfully*, and *fearfully*, as we *read* of ſome in *Scripture*, who have *lain long*, *ſighing* and *groaning* under *broken Bones*, and *wounded Conſciences*. Our *Natures* are ſo *polluted* with the *Leproſie* of *Sin*, that we ſhall never be *perfectly cured* of it while we are in this World. Under the *Law* we *read*, that when any *earthen*

Veſſels

Veſſels were *defiled*, they could not be ſufficiently *purged* till they were *broken* in *pieces*, *Lev.* 11. 33. The ſpiritual *Improvement* whereof is to *teach* us; that we can never be *perfectly cleanſed* from the *pollution* of our *Natures* till we are *broken* in *pieces* by *Death*. The beſt Man's *Sanctification* is not *perfect* here, the *holieſt* Man is not *thoroughly cleanſed* while he lives, but hath much of *Filthineſs* remaining in him. The *wiſe Man*, in *Prov.* 20. 9. *ſilences* all Men with this *Queſtion*, Who *can ſay I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my Sin?* Who *can* ſay ſo? Why, *none* can. We may do much in the work of *Mortification*, in the uſe of *Means* as the *Spirit* of *God* directs us in the *Word*; we may by the *ſtrength* of the *Spirit* keep *Sin from reigning in our mortal Bodies*, *Rom.* 6. 10. But though it *Reign* not as a *King*, yet it may *Rule* as a *Tyrant*, and we be brought into *Captivity* by it; and by force kept in *Bondage* under it ſometimes. How *willing* therefore ſhould a *Chriſtian* be to *die*, that he may be *free* from *Sin*; for he that is *dead*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 6. 7. *is free'd from Sin*. *Death* only will *free* us from the *danger* and *poſſibility* of *offending God* any more; for then we ſhall come to the *Spirits* of Juſt Men made *perfect*, *Heb.* 12. & 23.

Why then, O Chriſtian, ſhouldſt thou deſire to linger long here upon Earth, and to ſpin out a miſerable Life in this World, whereof Sin and Sorrow will have the greateſt Share. Here the beſt Chriſtians are engaged in perpetual Conflicts between Sin and Grace; Sin will not yield, and Grace cannot yield; Corruption compels one way, and Grace commands another. Haſte therefore, O Chriſtian, out of this troubleſome Conteſt; yea, make haſte to Heaven; for there, and there only it is that this Controverſie will be ended; for there

we

we ſhall no more live in fear of new Sins, nor in ſorrow for old Sins; but all Sorrow and Sighing ſhall ceaſe; all Tears ſhall there be wiped from our Eyes, and which is better, all Sin ſhall be rooted out of our hearts for ever. Upon this *Account* now *Death* is not only *neceſſary* in it ſelf, but it is that which the *People* of *God* ſhould *embrace* with the *greateſt willingneſs* and *chearfulneſs* that may be.

But this is not all; for the *People* of *God* muſt go one *ſtep higher*, and it is what the *Word* of *God* doth *require*, and that is not only to be *content* or *willing* to *die*, but *long* for *Death*. To be *contented* to *die* is a *good Temper* of *Soul*, and may be an *Argument* of the *Truth* of *Grace*, for it is *ſeldom* or *never* found in a *wicked man*, to be ſure not from a *right Principle*. But truly, *Chriſtians*, this is no ſuch great *Matter* in compariſon of what we ſhould labour to *attain* unto. *Muſe* ſeriouſly upon it a while, *O Chriſtian:* Is it not a *ſtrange kind* of *Expreſſion* to *drop* from the mouth of a *Saint*, that he is *content* to be *happy*; that one that profeſſeth all his *Happineſs* lies in the *hopes* he hath of *enjoying God* in *Heaven*; and that it is the *End* and *Deſign* of his *Life*, that he may *attain* unto this; and that yet when he comes to *ſpeak* of *Death*, he ſhould only ſay, he is *contented* to *die* that he may be *happy* in the *Enjoyment* of *God*? We *uſe* not to ſpeak thus concerning the *World*; here Men are not *ſaid* to be *content* to be *rich*, but *covetous* after *Riches*; not *willing* to be *advanced*, but *ambitious* after it: And why then ſhould it be ſaid only of a *Chriſtian*, that he is *contented* to be with *God*, and *contented* to be in *Heaven*? *Why*, Oh *why* ſhould not the *Soul*, the more *noble*, *excellent* Part of a Man be carried out with *vehement* and *earneſt longings* after its *proper* and *full Happineſs*, as well as the *Body*, that

that *vile Part* of Man is carried with *reſtleſs Appetite* after *Health*, *Safety*, and *Liberty*? Why ſhould a *Soul* alone be *contented* to be *happy*, when all things in the World do ſo *ardently court*, and ſo *vehemently purſue* their *reſpective Ends*, and *ſeveral Perfections*? Truly this is not that *Frame* and *Temper* that *Chriſtians* ought to *content* themſelves with; but their *Souls* ſhould be *raiſed* up to a *higher pitch*, even to a *holy longing* after their *being ever with the Lord*. It is the *Duty* of a *Chriſtian* to look out after ſo much *Enjoyment* of the *bleſſed God* as we are now *capable* of; and *becauſe* we cannot *fully* and *perfectly* enjoy him in this *Life*, to *long* after the *time* of our *departure* hence, and with holy *Pantings* of *Soul breath* forth *earneſt Deſires* that we may be *fully* and *eternally happy* in the *Enjoyment* of him.

Be not therefore, O my Soul, contented only, but be holily covetous, and *full* of *vehement longings after an Eternity of Bleſſedneſs in the Enjoyment of God; and becauſe this Body is that which hinders this deſired and longed for Happineſs, though thou may'ſt not diſſolve and break it into pieces thy ſelf, yet with Submiſſion to the Divine Will, wiſh it were broken, deſire that it may be diſſolved. And though thou muſt be contented to live God's time, yet henceforth be deſirous of, and long to die.*

To ſet this a little home upon thy *Conſcience*, O *Chriſtian*, conſider, that this *Frame* of *Soul* is that which the *Scripture* makes the *Temper* and the *Duty* of all *Believers*: Indeed there are few *Profeſſors* that are of this *Evangelical Temper* of *Soul*; yea, but *few* that are *willing* to *believe* they ought to be ſo: But yet this *Frame* of *Soul* is made the *Character* of a *ſincere Chriſtian*; the *Scripture* abounds with *Expreſſions* of this Nature, *Luk* 21.28.

Our

Our Lord ſpeaking concerning the *day* of *Judgment*, for the *encouragement* of *Believers*, bids them *look up, and lift up their Heads for their Redemption drew nigh*; by which our *Lord* means, not a bare *ſpeculation*, but a beholding with *joy* and *longing* for that *day* and *time*. 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *The Lord ſhall give a Crown of Righteouſneſs to them that love his appearing*. And in *Tit.* 2. 13. we are commanded to live *godly* in this *preſent World*, as thoſe that are *looking for the bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*. So in 2 *Pet.* 3. 12. *What manner of Perſons*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *ought we to be in all Holy Converſation and Godlineſs*; *looking for, and haſtning to the coming of the Day of God?* By theſe *Scriptures*, it *appears*, what is the *nature* and *temper*, the *diſpoſition* and *inclination* of a *Godly Man*, even to *look*, to *love*, to *long*, and to *haſten* unto the *enjoyment* of *God*; for that which is of *God* in any *Soul*, muſt needs *carry the Soul after God*.

But here I am afraid leaſt ſome *weak Chriſtians* ſhould be *troubled*, becauſe they cannot find theſe *ardent deſires* and *holy longings* of *Soul* in themſelves after their *diſſolution* and *enjoyment* of *God*.

Now that I may not diſcourage any *weak Believer*, nor make the *Hearts* of thoſe *ſad*, whom *God* would not have made ſad, I ſhall add a *few words*, though not for *encouragement* unto *ſloathfulneſs*, yet for *ſupport* againſt *fears* and *deſpondency*.

Therefore, *O Chriſtian*, ſearch thine own *Heart*, and ſee how it is with thee; and if thou findeſt it is ſo, as the *objection* intimates; ſee then if thou canſt find

find out the cauſe thereof; poſſibly thou art *grown careleſs* in thy *ſpiritual watch*, or thou *giveſt* too much *liberty* to thy ſelf in things that are *lawful*; the *World* it may be is got too near thy *Heart*, thy *Affections* run out *too much* after it. And no wonder then, if while this *frame* and *temper* continues, and things are thus out of *order* with thee, thou doſt not *long* after *Heaven*, nor art *willing* to *die*, though it be the only way by which thou *canſt* come to the *enjoyment* of *God*.

If upon *Examination* of thy *Heart*, thou doſt not *find* it thus with thee; why then *conſider*, though this *frame* of *Soul* be *Characteriſtical* of a *true Chriſtian*; yet you muſt *conſider* alſo, that the *ſame Character* of a *Chriſtian*, that is a *cauſe* of *joy* and *rejoicing* to ſome; yea, to a Man's own ſelf ſometimes; at another time may be a *cauſe* of *fear* and *doubting* to him; not but that, that which diſtinguiſheth a *true Chriſtian* from a *Hypocrite*, is the ſame at one time that it is at another, only we cannot ſee nor diſcover ſo clearly the *State* of our *Souls* towards God by it at one time as at another. And this is the *Reaſon* why ſome are ſo lifted up with *joy*; yea, with *holy longing* of *Soul* in hopes of the *Glory* of *God*; when others are caſt *down* under *fears* and *doubts*, as if they had no *hopes* of, or at leaſt no *preſent Intereſt* in, or *title* unto any ſuch thing.

But farther, Art thou *fearful*, O *Chriſtian*, of thy *ſelf*, becauſe thou canſt not *feel* this *ardency* of *deſires* in thee after thy *diſſolution*, and the *Glorious appearing* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſo as to look and long for the coming of theſe things? Why know, *O troubled Soul*, that *every Character of a Chriſtian is not diſcernable by all Chriſtians at all times, and*

in

in all conditions: Thou mayeſt have that in thee, which is the *cauſe* of theſe *longing deſires* in others, though at preſent it doth not *work* ſo *ſtrongly* in thee that thou mayeſt *ſenſibly feel* the *power* of its *operations*, thus drawing forth thy *Heart* and *Affections* in this *ardent* and *vehement* manner. *Grace* though weak and in the ſeed hath a tendency in it, and is making out after this *holy longing* and *rejoicing* of *Soul* in hopes of the *Glory* of *God*; though there may be the *intervention* of ſome time before there be an *attaining* to it. If there be the *remainders* of the *Spirit of Bondage* in thee to fear, in this caſe *Grace* in thee is not come to that *perfection* that it is in *others*; but yet it will be *growing* and *encreaſing* in thee; and as thy *Grace* grows *ſtronger* and *ſtronger*, ſo will thy *fears* of *Death* and *Judgment* grow *weaker* and *weaker*.

Furthermore, O *troubled Soul*, though thou canſt not feel thy *Soul breathing* forth it ſelf in theſe *holy longings* & *deſires* after thy *Diſſolution*, the beholding of the *face of God*, and the *appearance* of the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; yet doſt thou believe that it will be *incomparably better* for thee to be with *Chriſt*, than to abide here on *Earth*; and therefore though *Death* be dreadful to think of in it ſelf; yet ſeeing it is the only *paſſage* through which *God* hath appointed our *entrance* into *Heaven*; though thou canſt not ſay that thou *longeſt* for it; yet art thou willing to *entertain* it, if *God* ſends it; and though the *fears* of *Death* ſometimes diſcourage thee, yet doth not thy belief of, and hope in a *future State of Happineſs* abate thoſe *fears*, conſidering the *advantages* that will follow it. And though it be an *amazing* thing in thy *thoughts* to think of coming before the *Great* and *Holy GOD*; yet (except when *Temptations* make thee *fear* that *God* will *condemn* thee for thy *Sins*)

Sins) hadſt thou not *rather* come to *God* by *Death*, than not come to *him* at all, the *enjoyment* of whom is thy *Soul's utmoſt Happineſs*? And though the *ſight* of *Chriſt's coming in the Clouds at the Day of Judgment, in the Glory of his Father, and of the Holy Angels*, will be very *terrible* to behold; and the thoughts thereof ſtrike thee with *fear* and *trembling*, when thou conſidereſt thine own *ſinfulneſs*; and therefore canſt not think of that *Day* with ſo ſtrong a *Faith* and *Conſolation*, with ſuch *earneſtneſs* of *deſires* and *holy longing*, as ſome *Chriſtians* do; yet be not *diſcouraged*, though thou doſt not *long* for, yet doſt thou *love* the *appearance* of *Jeſus*. Canſt thou ſay thou wouldſt not take all the *pleaſures* of this *World*, for thy *hopes* of the *happineſs* of this *Day*? And couldſt thou attain to that *full aſſurance* that ſome of *God's People* have, thou wouldſt then with *earneſtneſs* of *deſire* and *holy longing of Soul*, cry out as the *Church* doth, *Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly*. Is it thus with thee, *O Soul*; why then be not *troubled*; nay, be *comforted*; for that which at preſent is *Faith*, *Hope*, *Deſire* and *Love*, may in a *little time* be *vehement longing* and *aſſurance*; yea, the riches of the *full aſſurance* of *Faith*. Reſt not therefore in any *weak deſires*; but labour for this *holy longing* of *Soul* after *God*, and the *Eternal Enjoyment* of him in *Glory*; that in *Life* and *Death* your *Soul* may *pant* and *breath* after *immediate* and *everlaſting Communion* with him.

This is that *frame* of *Soul* that the *People* of *God* ought to labour after, and which many have *attained* unto; the *earneſtneſs* and *vehemency* of whoſe *deſires* have been ſo *great*, that they have been as it were under *ſweet* and *delightful agonies* of *pain*, and their *Souls* even breaking with *longings* after the

preſence

preſence of *God* and *Chriſt* in *Glory*. *Examples* of this *Nature* that might be inſtanced in are many; I ſhall mention one, of which I was an *Eye* and *Ear Witneſs*; the *Perſon* was one of a middle *rank* and *quality* in the *World*, but of *great eminency* in *Grace* and *Holineſs* while living, and full of *Joy* and *Peace* when dying. It pleaſed *God*, who appoints us the bounds and place of our *Habitations*, to caſt my lot into a *Religious Family*, where this *Godly Perſon* lived, whoſe *Memory* to me is and ever ſhall be very precious; after I had been there ſome time, it pleaſed *God* to lay this *Perſon* upon a *ſick bed*, which proved a *death-bed*, whoſe Mouth was always full of *Holy* and *Heavenly Diſcourſe*, and as *Death* approached *nearer* and *nearer*, thoſe *Heavenly Expreſſions* were with *greater earneſtneſs* and *frequency repeated*; the *laſt Day* of whoſe Life as long as ſpeech continued was ſpent in uttering continual *expreſſions*, full of *holy longings* and *deſires* after the *enjoyment* of *God* and *Chriſt* in *Glory*. Methinks the *ſweetneſs* of the *Melody* revives my *Spirit* ſtill, when I call to *remembrance*, in my *ſerious thoughts*, what I then heard and ſaw: Oh with what *Joy and Delight* of *Soul* was the thoughts of *Death* entertained! Surely nothing was or could poſſibly be more *welcome* to ſuch a *Soul*, except it were the immediate *fruition* of *God* in *Heaven*; whoſe *Soul* in the *delightful*, much *longed* for, and *panted*-after *Happineſs*, in the *enjoyment* of *God*, breathed forth continually ſuch *expreſſions* as theſe for many *hours* together, *Come, Lord Jeſus, when ſhall I come and appear before thee, Oh Lord? when Lord, when? Oh come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* And thus this *Holy Perſon* died, changing a *frail mortal Life* on *Earth*, for an *immortal Life* in *Heaven*, where to be and to be moſt happy is all one.

I could fill up many ſheets with wonderful *expreſſions* of the *loves, longings, pantings,* and *breathings,* that I have read of *Holy Souls* after the *enjoyment* of *God* and *Chriſt,* both *Martyrs* and *others.* O, cryeth one, *the Love of Chriſt in my Heart caſteth a mighty heat; he knoweth that the deſire I have to be with him paineth me: I have ſick Nights, and frequent fits of Love Fevers for my well-beloved: Nothing is ſo painful to me as the want of his preſence, but it is a ſweet pain: O that he would cool my Love-Fever for him with real enjoyment of him.* O *Great King,* ſays one, *why ſtandeſt thou aloof off? why remaineſt thou among the Mountains? O well-beloved, why doſt thou pain a poor Soul with delays? A long time out of thy Glorious Preſence is as two Deaths and as two Hells to me; we muſt meet, I muſt ſee him; hungring and thirſting for Chriſt hath brought on me ſuch a neceſſity of enjoying him, that coſt what it will I cannot but aſſure Chriſt to my Soul; one ſmile of his Face to me is a Kingdom; a ſight of him is worth a World of Worlds. Sweet Jeſus,* crys one out, *wilt thou let me ſee Heaven to break my Heart, and never give me leave to enjoy it? O faireſt where dwelleſt thou? O never enough admired and adored Godhead, how can Creatures of yeſterday be able to enjoy thee? O what pain,* crys one, *is it, that Time and Sin, ſhould be as ſo many thouſand Miles between a loved, longed for Lord, and a pining Love-ſick Soul? Hell, and as I now think, all the pains of it laid on me, could not put me off from loving of him, I would refuſe,* ſays one, *no condition, not Hell excepted* (reſerving always God's hatred) *to buy the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of Jeſus. Oh cloſed Doors, and Vails, Curtains, and thick Clouds,* crys one, *that hold me in pain, while I find the ſweet burnings of his Love within me, which many waters cannot quench!*

O

O Death *do thy utmoſt againſt us*: *O* Torments, *O* Malice *of* Men *and* Devils, *bring* Hell *to help you in Tormenting the Followers of the* Lamb, *we will defie you to make us too ſoon happy, and to waft us too ſoon over the water, to that Land where that Plant, the Plant of Renown grows.* *O* cruel time, *that Torments us, and ſuſpends our deareſt enjoyments, that we wait for, when we ſhall be bathed and ſteeped Soul and Body in the depth of this Love of Loves. I half call,* ſays one, *his abſence cruel, and that Mask and Vail upon his Face a cruel covering, that hideth ſuch a fair, fair Face from a ſick Soul. I dare not challenge himſelf, but his abſence is a Mountain of Iron upon my heavy Heart. Oh when ſhall we meet! What do we here but ſin and ſuffer! Oh when ſhall the Night be gone, and the Shadows fly away, and the morning of that long long Day without Cloud or Night dawn! The Spirit and the Bride ſay come: Oh when ſhall the Lamb's Wife be ready, and the Bridegroom ſay I come alſo! O Time be not ſo ſlow, but run; yea, fly away ſwiftly! O Sun move ſpeedily, and haſten our Banquet! O Heavens cleave aſunder, that the bright Face and Head may ſet it ſelf through the Clouds! O that the Corn were ripe, and this World prepared for his hook! How long is it to the dawning of the Marriage day? O ſweet Lord Jeſus take wide ſteps! O my Lord come over the Mountains at one ſtride, cut ſhort Years, and Months, and Hours, ſhovel time and days out of the way; poſt, poſt, haſte our deſired, hungred, longed for Meeting; love is ſick to hear of till too Morrow; fly, O my beloved, like a Roe or a young Heart upon the Mountains of Separation.* *O that thou wouldſt remove,* ſays one, *the covering, and draw aſide the Curtain of Time; that thou wouldſt rent the Heavens and come down! O that the Shadows and Nights were gone, that*

the Day would break, and he that feedeth among the Lilies would cry and call to his Heavenly Trumpeters, make ready and let us go down and fold together the four corners of the World, and Marry the Bride the Lamb's Wife; ſince he hath looked upon me my Heart is not my own.

But I ſhall not proceed farther herein, though the *Subject* be exceeding delightful; but notwithſtanding what hath been ſaid herein, I am far from *thinking* that theſe *holy pantings* and *longings* of *Soul* are to be found in *every Godly Man*, or that none are *truly Godly* but thoſe that *find* and *feel* in themſelves theſe *pantings* and *longings* of *Soul* after the *enjoyment* of *God*, in this vehement and ardent manner; no I dare not ſay ſo; for I believe *multitudes*; yea, the *generality of Belsevers*, through *ſloathfulneſs*, never attain to this *high pitch* of *Grace* and *Aſſurance* of the *Divine Love* and *Favour*, who yet go to *Heaven* very *ſafely*; but where there are any that do attain unto this *plerophory* or *full aſſurance*, ſuch *Souls* live as it were on the very *Suburbs of Heaven* it ſelf: And by this we may ſee what is the *Duty* of a *Chriſtian* to labour after, and what *ſweet peace*, *joy*, and *delight* we all loſe, who do not come up to this *frame* and *temper* of *Soul*, even ſuch as *paſſeth our underſtandings* to conceive, or our *expreſſions* to make known; which made a *Godly Man* once cry out in a *holy pang of love unto Jeſus Chriſt*, If I can get no more, *O let me be pained to all Eternity with longing for him, the joy of hungring for Chriſt ſhould be my Heaven for evermore.*

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Death terrible in its ſelf. It is a dreadful Enemy. Wherein its Enmity doth conſiſt. This Enemy ſhall be deſtroyed, though it be the laſt Enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed. Chriſt by his Death hath overcome Death for Believers, and how far he hath done it. Of the fear of Death, and the Cauſes thereof. How the fears of Death may be Conquered and overcome. It is very uncomely for Chriſtians to be afraid of Death. It is poſſible for Chriſtians to live without the fear of Death. How Chriſtians may die with Courage and Joy.

THo' *death* as it brings *Holy Souls* to the *Eternal Fruition* of *God*, is *deſirable*; yet conſidered in its ſelf it is *dreadful*, being *accompanied* with *Diſeaſes* and *Diſtempers*, the *fore-runners* of *Diſſolution*, and *Separation* between *Soul* and *Body*, cauſing all the *Actions* and *Operations* of *Life* to ceaſe, in which State the *Body quickly* turns to *Corruption* and *Putrefaction*, and in *time* to *common Earth*. Now, though this be dreadful unto Nature, yet is there more of *Terror* in *death* unto *Impenitent ſinners*, becauſe to them it is not only a *Gate* to let them into the *Grave*, but a *Gate* to let them into *Hell*; the *firſt death* tranſmitting them unto the *ſecond death*. And yet how *great* is the *folly* of *Men* that they *fear death* for that which is *leaſt formidable* in it, but do not *fear* it, for that which renders it juſtly *terrible*? Could *death* do no more to us than what *reacheth* to *pains* and *diſtempers* on the *out-*

ward Man, and the *diſſolution* and *deſtruction* of the *Body* in the *Grave*, it were then a *tolerable evil*, but when we ſhall *conſider death* as a *puniſhment* for *ſin*, as that which puts us into an *unchangeable Eſtate*, this is that which makes it *dreadful* and *terrible* indeed. While we are in this *World*, which is the *time* of our *preparation* for an *Eternal State*, of *Strangers*, yea of *Enemies* we may become *Friends*; but when *death* hath once *ſeized upon us*, it is impoſſible our *State* ſhould then be *changed*. We cannot now ſay of the *vileſt Sinner* in the *World*, that there is no *hope* of him; we muſt not *write deſperation* upon the fore-head of the *wickedſt Man* on *Earth*: but if he *dies* in that *State*, then he is loſt and undone for ever; for as the *Tree falls*, ſo it *lies*, as *death* leaves *Men* ſo *Judgment* will find them. And this *Judgment* is ſuch as is *concluſive* and never to be *Repealed*. Hence it is therefore, that take the moſt *hardned Sinner*, one whom *Cuſtom* in *ſinning* hath made *paſt feeling*, yet when he comes to *die*, if *Conſcience* be but *awakened*, it is *impoſſible* for him to look *death* in the *Face* without great *fears* and *horrours*: Nay, it is a ſight ſo *amazing* and *confounding*, that were it not for the *Righteouſneſs* of *Chriſt*, and that *Satisfaction* he hath made unto the *Juſtice* of *God*, by his *death*, it were utterly *impoſſible* that any *Believer* ſhould bear up under it: but *Bleſſed* be *God*, the *Blood* of *Chriſt* then *ſpeaks Peace*, and ſo *Believers* are not only *ſupported*, but carried *comfortably* unto *Heaven*, through the *gloomy Valley* of the *Shadow* of *death*.

Death being thus *terrible* now, it muſt needs be looked upon as a *dreadful Enemy* unto Man. An *Enemy* now, is one that when he comes againſt us always comes *Armed* to do us a *miſchief*: ſuch an *Enemy* now is *death*, for ever ſince the *Fall* of *Man*,

Man, *death* hath been *Armed* with a *deadly Sting*; now this *Sting* of *death* whereby it becomes hurtful unto Man is *ſin*, ſo ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *The ſting of death is ſin.* Now this *Sting* reacheth not only to the *Body*, but to the *Soul* alſo; as to the *Body*, it takes away all thoſe *Contentments* and *Comforts* wherewith it was here *Refreſhed* and *Delighted*; *Death* rends the *Husband* from the *Wife*, and the *Wife* from the *Husband*; it divides *Children* from their *Parents*, and *Parents* from their *Children*; *death* ſpoils us of whatſoever is *deſirable* in this *life*, *ſtrips* a Man of all and turns him naked out of the *World*; But this is not all, *death* not only *bereaves* us of all that is *good* here, but it brings many Evils along with it; *Sickneſs*, *pains* on the *Body*, *Grief* and *Anguiſh* upon the *Mind* and *Spirit*: It is a *terrible Enemy* to *wraſtle* and *contend* withal, it will make a Man *ſweat* and *bleed*, no Man can *Encounter* with *death*, but he ſhall *feel* great *Anxiety* and *Vexation* both of *Body* and *Mind*, unleſs he have *ſtrength* from above to enable him to go through the *Conteſt*. *Death* in its own *Nature* is ſo *furious* an *Enemy* unto *Sinners*, that it will not *ceaſe* till it hath *pulled* the *Body* down into the *Grave*, and *dragg'd* the *Soul* into the *Preſence* of *God*, and from his *Tribunal* into the *Torments* of *Eternal Fire*; where the *firſt death terminates* in the *ſecond death*, and the *Torments exceed* not only all our *Expreſſions*, but all our *Apprehenſions* alſo: where *death* that is now ſuch a *dreadful Enemy*, would there be *counted* an *unſpeakable Mercy*, for there they ſhall ſeek *death*, but ſhall not be able to *find it*. But more particularly the *Enmity* of *death appears* in theſe *particulars*.

First, *The Fears of death do much abate our deſires after the Enjoyment of God in Heaven.* It

is true, *every Believer* is one that *loves God* above all, and looks upon *Heaven* as that which ſhall be his *dwelling place* for ever, and accordingly *ſincerely deſires* and *longs* after it; and in his *daily Converſation walks* with his *Face* thitherwards: but when he ſees *death* ſtands in the way *between* him and *Heaven*, and that there is no *coming* for him to that *place of Bliſs*, but he muſt paſs through that *dark Valley*; this puts him to a ſtand, and makes his *deſires weak and low*. The beſt *Chriſtians I believe* have ſometimes *felt* ſuch *workings* as theſe within their *Souls*; for tho' the *Regenerate part* diſcovering it ſelf in the *work* of *Sanctified Affections*, would be *ſoaring upwards towards God* and *Heaven*, in whoſe *preſence* the *Soul* would fain be: but *ſeeing death* ſtanding in its *way*, how are the *deſires* of ſuch a *Holy Soul* kept down by the *fears* of it, and he *turned back* as one that was *afraid* to come into his *Father's preſence*. Where is the *Chriſtian* the *Eye* of whoſe *Faith* is ſo *ſteadily fixed* upon *Chriſt* in *Heaven*, whoſe *Soul* is ſometimes ready to *cry* out, I deſire to be *diſſolved*, and *to be with Chriſt*, *which is far better*; yet withal, when he *ſees* the *rude hand* of *death* ſtretched out to *undreſs him*, and that there is no *coming* unto *Jeſus Chriſt* for him, but by *firſt* ſuffering a *Diſſolution*, and *laying down* of his *Earthly Tabernacle* in the *Grave*: though he would fain be with *Chriſt*, that he might enjoy him whom his *Soul* loveth; yet ſeeing this *diſmal Enemy death* in the way, doth not *ſhrink* back and *cry* out, O I *dare* not *venture*; O what a *dreadful Enemy* is this, and what *dreadful Enmity* doth it put forth in the *obſtructing* our *deſires*, though after *God* and *Heaven*; *cauſing* us to *run* from *God* as it were at that *time*, when we *truly* and *dearly* love him. *Happy Souls* are they, in whom *Faith* and *Love* work ſo *powerfully* as to *conquer* and *overcome* theſe *fears*. Secondly,

Secondly, *If death as an enemy prevails ſo as to abate our deſires after the Enjoyment of God in Heaven, it will be apt to endanger our falling in love with this preſent World, and ſo make us miſerable, by cauſing us to take up with the men of this World, who have their Portion in this Life.* Take a *Chriſtian* whoſe *deſires* after *Heaven* are *weak* though true, becauſe *blunted* by the *apprehenſions* of ſome *frightful difficulties* that muſt be gone through for the *attaining* of it; how apt is ſuch a one to be *tempted* to think that it is *beſt* for him to take up with thoſe *delightful pleaſures* that may be had here, without ſuch *dangerous adventures*? but now if that which *darkens* the *Bleſſed Viſion* of *Heaven*, and our *unſpeakable Happineſs* in the *fruition* of *God* there, and which alſo *deadens* our *deſires* after this *bleſſedneſs* be once *removed*, which uſually is the *dreadful apprehenſions* of *death*; with what *eaſe* can ſuch a *Soul* with a *Holy Scorn* and *Contempt deſpiſe* all the *trifling Vanities* of this *World*, as things not *worthy* to be *regarded*?

Thirdly, The *Enmity of Death manifeſts it ſelf in obſtructing a Chriſtians endeavours towards Heaven.* A *diſcouraged diſconſolate Soul* moves but *ſlowly*, be it towards *Earth* or *Heaven*. *Difficulties* that ſhould ſtir up *greater diligence*, uſually are great *diſcouragements* unto our *endeavours*, and we are apt to *cry* out with *Solomon*'s Sluggard, *There is a Lion in the way*, and therefore it is, *that the hands of the Sloathful refuſe to labour.* And ſo it is with us in *Spirituals*, *difficulties* ſoon *diſcourage* and *hinder* our *endeavours*; whereas they ſhould be a *whet* to *Induſtry*. The *Kingdom* of *Heaven* ſays our *Lord*, *ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* But *alas*, in many *Chriſtians* the *fears* of *death* are ſo *ſtrong* that they *keep* them

in *Bondage all* their *Days*. But now were *Death* removed out of our *way*; could *Chriſtians* be *cloathed* upon with their *Houſe* which is from *Heaven*, without *laying down* the *earthly Tabernacles* of their *Bodies* in the *Grave*; were there no ſuch thing as *dying* to make *way* for our *Entrance* into *Heaven*, how *delightful* would the *Thoughts* of *Heaven* be to us? we ſhould not then *run* with *Patience*, but with *Chearfulneſs* the *Race* that *is ſet before us*; we ſhould no *longer* need *Motives* to *quicken* us in our *way* to *Heaven*; but ſo *earneſt* and *vehement* would our *deſires* and *longings* be after it, that nothing could *ſtop* the *eager purſuits* of our *Souls* for the *obtaining* of it. How *delightfully* ſhould we *pray*, Lord *let thy Kingdom* of Glory *come*? Our *Meditations* thereof would ſo *draw* forth our *Affections*, and *raviſh* our *Souls* in the *delightful fore-thoughts* of it, that we ſhould think nothing *hard* to *part* with for the *attaining* of it. But that now which *abates* our *Deſires* after *Heaven*, muſt needs *hinder* our *diligent Endeavours* in the *uſe* of *Means for* the obtaining of it.

Now as *Death* is an *Enemy*, ſo it is the *laſt Enemy*, but yet withal it is *an Enemy* that ſhall be *deſtroyed*; ſo the *Apoſtle* tells us, 1 *Cor.* 15. and 16. *Now* the *laſt Enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed is Death.*

But how or by whom is this laſt Enemy Death deſtroyed and overcome.

I anſwer, Not by *our ſelves*; for *Death* ſeems rather to have *deſtroyed* us than we *it*, when it brings the *Body* down into the *Grave*, and *turns* it into *Corruption* and *Rottenneſs*. But this *laſt Enemy* is *deſtroyed* by our *victorious Redeemer* the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the *Captain* of our *Salvation*; he it

is

is who by the *Merit* of his *Death* hath *overcome Death*; and of a *deadly Enemy*, hath made it *become* a moſt *comfortable Friend* to all that *believe* in him.

Now for this we muſt know *Chriſt* hath not *delivered* us from our *Obligation* unto *Death*; for ſince the *Fall* of *Man*, *Death* is become *neceſſary* for a *Chriſtian*, being the only *way* appointed by *God* for our *Entrance* into *Heaven*; and therefore we *ſee* that *Believers die* as well as *Unbelievers*. Neither hath *Chriſt delivered* us from *Sickneſs* and *Diſtempers*, the *uſual Fore-runners* of *Death*. *David* complains, *Pſal.* 38. *My Loins are filled with a loathſome Diſeaſe; there is no ſoundneſs in me becauſe of thine Anger, neither is there any reſt in my Bones becauſe of my Sin.* But now in theſe *Reſpects Chriſt* hath *overcome* Death for *Believers*.

Firſt, *He hath taken away the Sting of Death.* This *Captain* of our *Salvation* upon the *Croſs*, as in an *open Field* and *pitch'd Battel*, did *ſpoil Principalities* and *Powers*, *Col.* 2. 15. Now one of theſe *Powers* armed againſt us was *Death*, and the *Weapon* with which *Death fights* againſt us is *Sin*: Our [redacted] *Jeſus Chriſt* now took away our *Sins* upon the *Croſs*, and ſo *ſpoil'd Death* of his *Power*. For having *ſpoiled Principalities* and *Powers*, he made a *ſhew* of them *openly*, *triumphing* over them on *his Croſs*. *Death* once *ſtruck* the *Lord* of *Life* and *Glory* with its *Sting*, and by *ſtriking* him *loſt* its *Sting* in his *bleſſed Side*; ſo that ever ſince all that are in *Chriſt*, do or may inſult over *Death*, as being *conquer'd* and *overcome* for them; ſo ſpeaks the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Cor.* 15. and 55, 57. *O Death where is thy Sting, O Grave where is thy Victory. The Sting of Death is Sin*, ſays he, *and the Strength of Sin is the Law: But thanks be to God, who*

hath given us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, *Christ delivers Believers from the fears of Death.* Heb. 2. 14, 15. *Forasmuch then as the Children were Partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through Death he might destroy him that had the power of Death, that is the Devil:* But is this all? No, the *Apostle* adds another *end*; and that is, that *he might deliver them who through fear of Death were all their life-time subject unto Bondage.* Now that which makes an *Enemy* to be *feared* is his *Strength*, his *deadly Weapons*: Christ now by *dying* on the *Cross* took away the *Weapons* of *Death*, its *Sting* whereby it hath *Power* to *hurt*, and that is *Sin.* Now *Death* being *disarmed*, Christians are *free'd* from the *Fears* of it. It is true Men may sometimes *fear* a *naked Enemy*; but there is no *real Cause* for it, seeing he cannot *hurt* them. And so the *People* of *God* sometimes may *exceed* in their *Fears* of *Death*, but they have no *just Cause*; neither would they be so *afraid* of *Death*, if they were *strong* in the *Faith* of *Jesus Christ*, who hath *disarmed Death for them.*

Thirdly, *Christ delivers his People from the Curse of Death.* In it self *Death* is a *Curse*, the *Punishment* of Man's *Sin*, the *Expression* of *God's Wrath*, the *Execution* of the *Law*, and the *dreadful Sentence pronounced* against Man upon his *Apostacy* from *God.* In the *day thou eatest thereof*, says God, *thou shalt die the Death.* But all that *die* under the *stroke* of *Death*, do not *die* under the *Curse* of it; all deserve it indeed, but to some the *Nature* of it is *changed*; *thorough* him, who is the *Resurrection* and the *Life*, they that *believe* shall never

never *die*: A Voice from *Heaven* hath *pronounced* them *bleſſed* that *die* in the *Lord*, *Rev.* 14. 13. The *Nature* of *Death* is *changed* to them that are in *Chriſt*, ſuch do but *ſleep*. To *die* to a *Saint* is no more than to *undreſs* and *go* to *Bed*: Let what will become of *Dives*, our *Friend* Lazarus *ſleepeth*, *John* 11. 12. The *Juſt by Death enter into Peace, they reſt in their Beds, and are taken from the Evil to come.* *Death* to the *wicked* is like a *Malefactor's* putting off his *Cloths*, that he may be *ſcourged* according to *Law*: So *Death uncloathes* the *wicked*, that by the *Wrath* of *God* they may be *tormented* for *ever*. But now to the *godly* Man *Death* is but like a *Child's putting off* an *Old Garment*, that he may put on a *new one*: So *Death uncloathes* the *Godly* of the *Rags* of their *Mortality*, that they may be *cloathed* with an *incorruptible Garment* that ſhall never *fade* or *change*, but keep its *beautiful Luſtre* and *Glory* for *ever*.

Fourthly, *Chriſt delivers his* People *from the Dominion of Death*. It is true when *Death* hath laid their *Bodies* down in the *Grave*, it ſeems to have *Dominion* over them; but it is but for *a while*, for our *Lord Jeſus* hath taken away this *ſeeming Dominion* of *Death*, by the *Merit* of his *own Death*, and hath declared *his Victory* over it, and *our deliverance* from it, by *raiſing* up his own *Body* from the *Grave*. *Chriſt* by his *Death* did *meritoriouſly conquer Death* for *Believers*, but he did not *actually conquer* it till his *Reſurrection*, but then he did; the *Day* of his *Reſurrection* was the *Day* wherein *Grace* did *triumph* thorough *Chriſt* towards *believing Souls*; for on that *Day Chriſt* did openly ſhew to *Heaven*, to *Hell*, to *Earth*, that *Death* was not only *conquerable* by *Believers*, but that it was *actually conquered* for them thorough him. Bleſſed *Souls*

in

in *Heaven believe* it to their *everlasting Conſolation*, and are thereby fully *confirmed* in the *Reſurrection* of their own *Bodies*, becauſe their Head is already riſen for them. The *damned in Hell* have the *Knowledge* of it to their greater *Torment*, becauſe they now *know* their *ſinful Bodies* ſhall be raiſed to *ſuffer* for ever with their *Souls* in that *Place* of *Torment*, and therefore they *believe* and *tremble*. The *Saints* on *Earth* alſo know it, and therefore they *rejoice* in the *believing Expectations* of it; being *aſſured* that as the *Bonds* of *Death* were *looſed*, by which *Chriſt* was *held* in the *Grave* for the *ſpace* of *Three Days*, but could not poſſibly be *held* by them any *longer*; ſo neither ſhall it be *poſſible* for *Believers* always to be *held* under them. But there is a *time coming*, when all that are *in their Graves ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and ſhall come forth*, *Joh.* 5.28. And *if we believe*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that Jeſus died, and roſe again, even ſo them alſo that ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him*, *in* 1 *Theſ.* 4. *and* 14. for ſays the ſame Apoſtle, *Chriſt is riſen, and become the firſt Fruits of them that ſleep*, *in* 1 *Cor.* 15.20. And *as Chriſt being raiſed from the Dead dieth no more, Death hath no more Dominion over him.* So the *time* will not be long before *Believers* ſhall alſo be *raiſed* from the *Dead*, and ſhall *die no more*; for there ſhall then be no *more Death*, nor *Sorrow*, nor *Crying*, nor *Pain*; no *more Diſeaſes*, or *Fears* of *Death*, or the *Grave*; *for behold all former things are paſſed away, and all things are become new*, *Rev.* 21.45.

But though *Chriſt* hath *overcome Death*, yet is there ſtill a *Fear* of it in *moſt*: And indeed *Death* is an *Object* of *Fear*; neither is all *Fear* of *Death* to be *condemned* as *ſinful*. Now for the better underſtanding of this, that *Death* is an *Object* of *Fear*, and

and when it may be *lawful* to *fear Death*, and when the *Fear* of it is *ſinful*, I ſhall *conſider* Man in a *threefold Reſpect*. As he is a *meer Man*, as he is a *ſinful Man*, and as he is a *true Believer*.

Firſt, I ſhall *conſider Man as he is a meer Man, compounded of Soul and Body, and ſo the Nature of Man abhors Death*; and if it were *poſſible* (as it is not) to find out a *Man* in the *World* that were *free* from *all* manner of *Sin*, yet would he *fear Death*, were he liable to it, becauſe it is that which tends to his *Diſſolution* and *Deſtruction*. Thus our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf, though he was *perfectly holy*, and *free* from all *Sin*, yet in this *ſenſe* he *feared Death*; and therefore he *prays*, *Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me*. Thus now to *fear Death* as it is *evil* and *deſtructive* unto *Nature* is not *ſinful* or *unlawful*.

Secondly, *Conſider Man as he is ſinful and unregenerate, and ſo Death is an Object of Fear, and full of Horror*: For to all ſuch *Death* comes *armed* with *Power*, not only to make a *Separation* between *Soul* and *Body*, (for ſo *Death* rules over all,) but it comes to *kill* and to *deſtroy Soul* and *Body* for *ever*; for to *ſuch* it is not *Death* alone, as it is to the *Godly*; but it is *Death* and *Hell* together. *Rev.* 6. 8. *And I looked and behold a pale Horſe, and his Name that ſat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.* It is no *wonder* if *Death* be *dreadful* and *terrible* unto *ſuch*; but it is rather a *wonder* that ſuch can take any *reſt* in the *night*, or *enjoy* any *quietneſs* in the *day*, that under the *Fears* of *Death* they are not *diſtracted*. But here is the *Miſery* of *ſuch*, they are ſo *afraid* of *Death*, that they will not let the *Thoughts* of it come into *their Minds*, but do what they can to *baniſh* the *Thoughts* of

of that *evil day far* from them. But know, O *fooliſh Sinner*, though thou *ſleepeſt*, and art *ſecure* in *Sin*, yet thy *Death* and thy *Damnation ſlumbers* not; for *Death* and *Hell* are *riding* on *Horſe-back*, making *haſte* towards thee, and will ſoon overtake thee, to thy *eternal Ruine* and *Deſtruction*; and then thou ſhalt know by *ſad Experience*, that the *Fears* of the *firſt Death*, which now thou laboureſt to *ſtifle*, yea to *drive* away from thy *Thoughts*, were not ſo *full* of *dread* and *horror*, as the *feeling* of the *Second Death* will be for ever. *Death* therefore unto *wicked Men* is an *Object* to be *feared*, and the *fear* of *Death* in them is not only *lawful* but *commendable*, and that upon which their *Thoughts* ſhould much *dwell*, becauſe it is that which will *prevent* much *Sin* in them while they *live*, and may *poſſibly* render *Death* more *comfortable* to them when they come to *die*.

Thirdly, *Conſider Man as regenerate, and become a true Believer, yet ſo he may, and often doth fear death*: For let a *Man* be never ſo much a *Saint*, yet he will be ſtill a *Man*; and therefore as *death* will be *death*, ſo *nature* will ſtill be *nature*; and therefore *death* as *death* will be *abhorred*. Neither is there any *neceſſity* that the *fear* of *death* ſhould be wholly *conquered* and *ſubdued* in the *Godly*, ſo as that it ſhould not be, becauſe it may and often doth turn to their *Benefit* and *Advantage*; for hereby they are made to *walk* more *humbly* with God and more *watchfully* over themſelves; for while they *conſider* that they are *poor*, *frail*, *dying Creatures*, ſubject unto *death* continually, and that they muſt *paſs* from thence unto *Judgment*, to give an *Account* of what they have done in the *Body*; by this means they are kept from *falling* into *many Sins*, that now would *wound* their *Conſcien-*

ces,

ces, and *break* their *peace*, and hereafter make their *death* more *dark* and *uncomfortable*. By this *fear* of *death* alſo the *Godly* are *quickened* in their *preparations* for *Heaven* and *Eternity*; for becauſe *death* is ſo *certain* that it will come, and withal ſo *uncertain* when it will come, the *Godly* are hereby *ſtirred* up unto a *ſpeedy* and *diligent preparation* for it, that ſo they may be *ready* for their *departure* whenſoever *God* by *death* ſhall call them hence.

And *death* now is an *Object* of *Fear* in general, ſo are there *Reaſons* why *Chriſtians fear death* in *particular*, as,

Firſt, *Some are afraid of death becauſe of the extremity of thoſe pains which they muſt undergo, when they are dying, and becauſe of the Corruption and rottenneſs which their Bodies muſt turn to when they are dead.*

But admit what thou ſayeſt, *O Chriſtian*, ſhould be true, that thy *pains* in *dying* ſhould be *great*; yet haſt thou not *ſinned*, and thereby *deſerved* that what thou *feareſt*, thou mayeſt *feel*; let me tell thee, There is not the moſt *Righteous man* on *Earth*, but hath *ſinned*, and the *leaſt ſin merits* more *pains* than any man in the *firſt death* ever yet *endured*: If therefore thy *pains* in *dying* ſhould be *great*, it is *juſt* with *God* what thou *ſuffereſt*, and it is of his *mercy* that thou *ſuffereſt* no *more*; for there is no *compariſon* between thy *pains* and thy *ſins*, between what thou mayeſt *ſuffer*, and what thou *deſerveſt* to *ſuffer*: let thy *ſickneſs* be what it will, and thy *pains* as *great* as well thou canſt *imagine*; they are no *more*, nay they are not ſo *much* as thou haſt *deſerved*: If *God* ſhould deal with thee according to the *demerit* of thy *ſins*, it is not the *moſt ſmart* and *ſevereſt pains* of a *Temporal death* that are ended by *dying*; but *eaſeleſs* and *endleſs*

Torments

Torments in *Hell* to all *Eternity* that would be thy *Portion*. *Fear* not therefore, O *living Christian*, *complain* not, O *dying Christian*, though thy *pains* in *death* ſhould be *great*, for it is but the *puniſhment* of thy *ſins*, nay let me ſay to thee, O *Chriſtian* be *thankful* and *rejoyce*, for it is the *laſt puniſhment* thou ſhalt ever *endure* for thy *ſins*, either *here* or *hereafter*.

But further? *Is it the corruption and rottenneſs that thy body muſt be ſubject to in the Grave, that terrifies and affrights thee?*

Let me ſay this unto thee, It is no very *great matter* what becomes of thy *Body* when it is once *dead*, though it were burnt to *Aſhes* at a *Stake*, tho' it *rot* in the *Fields* as *Dung* upon the *Ground*, tho' in the *Bowels* of the *Earth* it become a *Feaſt* for *Worms*, and turn to *corruption* and *rottenneſs*; this will then be of no more *concern* to thee, than if it had with the *greateſt Coſt* and *Charge* been *Embalmed* and *Buried* by thy *deareſt Friends*. The *State* of *death* knows nor *feels* no *difference between* the *one* and the *other*: And what if thy *Body* lies in the *Grave* for a while, it will not there be *miſerable*, for it *feels* no *pain*, but *reſts* quietly in its *Bed*, *ſweetly ſleeping* away *time* until the *Morning* of the *Reſurrection*, when thou ſhalt *awake* out of the *Duſt* again, and ſhalt *die* no more. And in the *mean time* thy *Soul*, [if thou art a *true Believer*, for unto ſuch only there is *Peace* and *Comfort* in *death*] upon its *departure* out of the *Body* is *advanced* unto *unſpeakable* Happineſs in *Heaven*, among the *Spirits* of *Juſt Men* made *perfect*, in the *Eternal Enjoyment* of the *infinitely bleſſed God*, the *Fountain* of *Light* and *Life*; where thou ſhalt have as much *Delight* and *Satisfaction* as thou canſt *poſſibly contain*, and more than now thou canſt *conceive*: And why then art thou ſo *affrighted* with

with the *fears* of *Death*, when this is all the *hurt* it can do thee?

O but *Death is that which will take me from all my Friends and Relations, and deprive me of all that Comfort and Delight that here I enjoy in their ſweet Society.* To this I *Anſwer*, Suppoſe it be ſo that by *Death* thou art taken from a *dear Yoke-fellow* that is now the *Delight of thine Eyes*; ſuppoſe thou *loſeſt* all thy *Friends* and *Kindred* in the *Fleſh*, whom thou *loveſt* even as thy own *Soul*, not knowing *certainly* whether ever thou ſhalt ſee them, or at leaſt ſo as to *know* them any more again for *ever*: If this be all thy *trouble*, how *eaſily* can *God* make it up unto thee: *Alas*, when *Death* hath once *opened* thine *Eyes*, and let thee *ſee* what *bleſſed Society* thou ſhalt *enjoy* in *Heaven*, thou wilt not, thou canſt not be *troubled* for what thou haſt *left behind* thee here: when thou art come to the *Heavenly Jeruſalem*, the *City* of the *Living God*, to an *innumerable company of Angels, to the General Aſſembly of the firſt born, to God the Judge of all, to the Spirits of Juſt men made perfect, to Jeſus* the *Mediator* of the *New Covenant*, and where *the blood of Sprinkling ſpeaks better things* than the *blood* of *Abel*: will it then *grieve* thee that thou haſt *left* thy *Friends* and *Relations* on *Earth*? Why this is the *State* thou *expecteſt*, this is the *Company* thou *hopeſt* to *enjoy* hereafter; why then let the *believing joyful expectations* of this *Aſſociation*, bear up thy *Soul* under thy *Fears* by *Death* of *loſing thy Friends and Relations* here.

But thou mayeſt ſay poſſibly they may want me when I am dead and gone, though I want not them; whilſt I am with them, I ſee their wants and take care to ſuppy them, and when they are going into any evil or ſinful way, I Councel them, I Reprove them, and I pray for them and endeavour to in-

ſtruct

struct them in the fear of the Lord. But when I am gone, I know not who will do any of these things for them, and what then will become of them?

To this I *Answer*, canst thou say in good *earnest* that this is *thy strait*, that therefore thou *desirest* to *live*, that thou mayest be a *means* if *God* saw it *good* to further and *promote* their *Souls Happiness*: why then let me say this to thee, is it not a *time* of *health* with thee now, doth *God* lend thee the sweetness of such *Relations* and *Friends*, shew that thou *lovest* them indeed, by taking hold of the *present opportunities* thou now hast to *Admonish*, to *Reprove*, and to *Correct*, so far as it is thy *place*? Oh *double* and *treble* thy *diligence* in all *Respects* wherein thou mayest be *advantageous* to their *Souls*; *multiply* thy *Prayers* and *Tears*, thy *Sighs* and *Groans* unto *God*; follow him *Night* and *Day*, and give him no *rest* until thou hast some *good ground* to *hope* that *God* is not only thy *God*, but the *God* of thy *Friends* and *Relations* also; and when thou hast done thy *utmost*, and *God* by *Death* calls thee away hence, so that thou canst do no more, *quietly resign* up thy *Soul* into his *hands*, and *commit them* to the *care* and *kindness* of *thy God*, who is the *Great* and *Universal Father*, that takes *care* of all his *Creatures*, but is by *special Relation* a *Father* to them that *fear* and *serve* him.

But may some poor Soul say, when I come to die, the change that I must pass through by death, is so strange and so amazing, that I know not how I shall be able to bear it, death will both change my place and company: here I converse with Friends and Relations and Acquaintance, whom I well know, because I have lived so long among them; but when I go hence, O what a strange place and company shall I then see, such as I never saw in all my life, full of dazling and astonishing Brightness and Glory, the

thoughts

thoughts whereof may juſtly fill my Soul with fear and amazement.

To this I *Anſwer*, art thou a *Chriſtian* indeed, and doſt thou *talk* after this manner as if thou wert a *Stranger* to *God*, to *Chriſt*, to *Heaven*, and the *Happineſs* of *Glorified Saints* there; whom is it thou calleſt *Father* every time thou *Prayeſt*? is it not the *God* of *Heaven*? What doſt thou make of *Jeſus Chriſt* thy *Profeſſed Lord* and *Saviour*, whoſe *love* to *thee* was ſo *great* that he would *manifeſt* it in no other *way*, than that by which he might moſt *endear* himſelf unto thee, and moſt *ſtrongly engage* thy *Love* and *Affections* unto *him*, and that was by *laying down* his *Life* and *ſhedding* of his *Blood*, a a *Ranſom* for thy *Soul*, and a *propitiation* for *thy Sins*, whom thou *profeſſeſt* alſo to *believe* that he is *Aſcended* up into *Heaven*, *and ſits at the right hand of God* preſenting his *Blood* and *Sufferings* before the *Throne* of the *Majeſty* on high; that both thy *ſelf* and thy *Services* that are *Impure* and *Imperfect* in *themſelves*, may yet be *accepted* through *him*: Is it not *through* his *Righteouſneſs* alone, that thou *hopeſt* for *Juſtification* unto *Life* and *Happineſs*, and *through* his *Strength* that thou art *enabled* to *perform* all thy *Duties*, and yet doſt thou not *know* him; what a *ſtrange* thing is this? But *alas* ſayeſt *thou*, it is *very little* that I *know* of him, *never did I ſee him* in all my *days*. But what if thou haſt not *beheld* him with thy *Bodily Eyes*; yet canſt thou not ſay with the *Apoſtle*, whom *having not ſeen*, yet thou haſt and doſt *believe* in him; and *ſometimes*, it may be ſo as to *rejoyce* with that *Joy* that is *unſpeakable* and *full* of *Glory*; and tho' thou haſt not *known* him *after* the *Fleſh*, yet thou haſt *known* him *after* the *Spirit*, though thou haſt *known* him but a *little*, and what thou doſt *ſee* and *know*

of

of him *Spiritually*, is but through a *Glass darkly*; yet be not *dejected*, *fear* not, for he *knows* thee *perfectly*, and hath *separated* thee and set thee *apart* for *himself* from *Eternity*, and hath *effectually called* thee in *time*, *Justified* thee by his *Grace*; yea, he *knows* thee by *Name*, and now in the *approach* of *Death*, he is coming to *take* thee to *himself*, where thou shalt *see him* as *he* is, and *know him as thou art known of him*. And as for those *Glorious Creatures*, the *Angels* and *Saints* in *Heaven*, methinks it should even *Ravish* thee to think how those *Noble* and *Excellent Creatures* will *flock* about thee and *bid* thee *welcome* into *Heaven* as one *greatly beloved* of the *Lord*, saying unto thee, not as the *Angel* once said unto the two *Mary*'s, Mat. 28. *come see the place where the Lord lay*, but *come* see the *Throne* where thy *Lord* sits in all his *Majesty* and *Glory*.

But may some say, I may well be afraid to die, because it is that which puts an end to my life and being here: and who can without fear look upon himself, and see his Body withering and decaying and not be troubled at it? is not Death the great Dread and Terror of the World? Job *therefore calls it*, The King of Terrors. *O how doth the Expectations of Death appale the Faces, weaken the Hands, shake the Hearts, imbitter the Pleasures, and damp and cool the Spirits, even of the Mighty ones of the Earth! Should God say unto many, that they should set their Houses in Order, for they shall die and not live; should they see a* Tekel, *written upon their Walls, their days are finished, this night shall their Souls be taken from them; what sad Lamentations would most Men make? Life, O how sweet is it to them, all that they have would they give for their Lives; doth not Nature it self teach us to seek the Preservation of our Beings, and abhors whatever tends to its Dissolution as death doth?*

To

To this I *Anſwer*, becauſe of this *abhorrency* of *Death*, which is implanted in the *Nature* of all *Men* living, there may be even in the *beſt* of *God's People* a fear of *Death* and an unwillingneſs to *die*. Our *Lord* himſelf, who was *without Sin*, diſcovers ſomething of this, who though to ſhew his great *willingneſs* and *readineſs* to *die* for *Sinners*, ſaid, *I have a Baptiſm to be Baptized withal*, which was the *Baptiſm of his Blood*, and *how am I ſtraitned till it be accompliſhed*; thinking *long* for the coming of the *day of his Death*, whereby the *work* of our *Redemption* was in a *great meaſure* to be *accompliſhed*; yet when *Death* came to him, ſee how his *pure* and *innocent Nature* was put to it, when he cry'd out, *Father, if it be poſſible let this cup paſs from me*: It is true in his *Caſe* there was more than *Death* in it, there was *wrath*, there was a *curſe*, there was all the *Sins* of the *World* wrung into that *Cup* to mingle him a *bitter draught*; but this was alſo *ſomething* of it; for there was *Death* in the *Cup*. It will therefore be the *Wiſdom* of *Chriſtians*, to whatever *meaſure* of *confidence* and *aſſurance* they may have *attained*, ſo as upon good grounds to have *overcome* the *fears* of *Death*, and to look upon their *dying day* as the moſt *joyful day* in their *lives*; yea, though in this confidence their *Hearts* may ſometimes pant after the coming of that *day*, and they ready to cry out, *make haſte my beloved, come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly*; yet will it be your *wiſdom* to buckle on all your *Armour*, to get all your *Evidences* and *Experiences* ready, for the conflict of that *day* and *hour* may be ſuch as that you may ſtand in *need* of your *utmoſt Preparations*; for you know not how the *Fleſh* may ſhrink in the *day of Tryal*. But if it ſhould be ſo; yet be not *diſcouraged*, O *Chriſtian*, for poſſibly this very *inſtance* of our *Lord*, may be left upon *Record* for this very end, to *comfort* his *People* when they

they ſhall be overtaken with the ſame *fears* and *troubles*.

And as for the *ſweetneſs* of this preſent *Life*, the loſing whereof makes thee to *fear Death*, let me ask thee this Queſtion, Who art thou that art ſo *fond* of this *preſent Life*? Art thou a *Chriſtian* indeed and in truth; or doſt thou only make a *profeſſion* of *Religion*, without the *life* and *power* of *Godlineſs*? If thou art only an *outward profeſſor*, I wonder not that thou ſhouldſt ſet ſo high a *price* and *value* upon *life*, and art ſo unwilling to *part* with it, becauſe all thy *happineſs* is *terminated* in things that are *enjoyed* on this *ſide Death* and the *Grave*; for as for thoſe *great* and *glorious things*, that *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, nor can poſſibly enter into the Heart of Man to conceive, that God hath prepared for them that love him*; and which are to be *enjoyed* beyond *time* in *Eternity*, thou haſt no *lot* or *portion* in thoſe *matters*: What wonder therefore, if thou *mourn* and *ſigh* even to the breaking of thy Loyns, when *Death* comes to put an end to thy *Life*; for then it ſeparates between thee and thy *happineſs* for ever. But if thou art one that truly *feareſt God*, thou needſt not be ſo fooliſhly fond of this *Life*; for what is there in it that ſhould make thee doat upon it; Is it not a *Life* full of *cares* and *troubles*? Have not thy *Sins* made it ſo? The *Wiſe Man* tells us, that all that is in this *Life*, that can be outwardly enjoyed, is nothing but *Vanity* and *vexation* of *Spirit*; Haſt thou not by *experience* found it ſo? Thou ſhouldſt therefore with *Holy Job* bleſs God, not only for *giving* of *Life*, but for *taking* of it away alſo; *God* gave it thee for a time, and but for a ſhort time too; and if thou wert ſo *wiſe* as thou ſhouldſt be, thou oughteſt to count it thy *felicity* that it is ſo ſhort; for it is a *Life* of *ſorrow*, and who will complain becauſe his *ſorrows* are ſo ſhort? It may be thou

thou hast met with some *pleasures* here that *gratifie* thy *sense*; but are they comparable to what thy *Soul* hath tasted in the *enjoyment* of *God*, unto which *God* by *Death* is calling thee to the *enjoyment* of with himself in *Heaven* to all *Eternity*? Darest thou say that *Earth* is like *Heaven*? Is *Christ* in those dark and *dim discoveries* he makes of himself in the *Gospel*, like to *Christ* in the *full* and *open manifestations* of himself in all his *Glory* in *Heaven*? Canst thou say thy *Soul* is so like him in *Wisdom*, *Holiness*, *Joy*, and *Peace* here, as it will be above, when it comes to be *enrolled* among the *Spirits* of *just Men made perfect*? If thou wilt be in love with *Life*, be in love with *Eternal Life*; and henceforth *fear* not to *die* at *God's* call; for the *obedience* that thou owest unto *God* binds thee, and the *gain* that *Death* will bring should both *invite* and *encourage* thee. Though *Death* ends this *Life* it begins another; and though thou may'st rot under ground in one part of thee, yet it is in thy vilest part, thy Body; and even that will spring up and flourish again shortly: And in the mean time, thy *Soul*, thy *better part*, shall live a more *noble* and *excellent life*. Think well therefore of *Death*; for as it *ends* thy *Life*, so it *ends* thy *Sin* and thy *sufferings* also.

In these particular Instances, *O Christian*, thou seest how little *cause* there is for thee to be *afraid* of *Death*. I shall now in the next place endeavour to discover how *unfit* and *uncomely* a thing it is for *Christians* to *fear Death*; and for this consider,

First, A *Christians fearing of Death, brings a reproach upon Religion, as if there were not that in Christianity, that could lift up a Soul above the fears of Death.* For a *Papist* that professeth no Man can in an ordinary way be *assured* that he shall

go

go to *Heaven* when he *dies* to *tremble* at the *thoughts* of *Death*, this is no great matter, it is but to *act* according to what his *Religion* teacheth him; but for one that profeſſeth the knowledge and aſſurance of *Salvation* and a *future happy State*, to ſtand amazed at *death*, the way and paſſage through which *God* hath appointed we muſt *enter* into *Heaven*, where this *happineſs* is to be enjoyed, ſhews, if not a *want* of *Faith*; yet at leaſt a *great weakneſs* of *Faith*, and gives occaſion to thoſe that ſpeak *evil* of the *good ways* of *God*, to reflect diſgracefully upon *Religion*.

Secondly, *To live in fear of Death, is that State of Bondage and Slavery which wicked Men are under, and from which Jeſus Chriſt came to deliver his People*: And therefore for a *Believer* to live *dejectedly* under the *fears* of *Death* is a very *uncomely* thing. Indeed the *fears* of *wicked Men* are ſo great, that they cannot think of *Death* without *horrour*; and when they come to *die* they are compelled to it, for of all things in the *World* they dread *Death* moſt; and could they but be *aſſured* that they ſhall live here always, they would deſire no other *Heaven*. *Fearfulneſs* and *amazedneſs* under the *apprehenſions* of *Death* is the *proper State* of *wicked Men*, that *Slavery* and *Bondage* unto which they are always ſubject; for upon good grounds they can have no *hopes* in *Death*; but are full of *fearful expectations of Wrath and fiery Indignation* that ſhall *Torment* them for *ever*. But now for *true Believers*, *God* hath made your *ſtate and condition* very unlike unto theirs, as to the iſſues of *Death*, becauſe you have good hopes of *Eternal Life* even in *Death*; ſo ſays the *Wiſe Man*, *Prov.* 14. 32. *The Righteous hath hope in his Death.* Now ſince there is ſo *great* an unlikeneſs between you and them both in *Death*

and

and *after Death*, let there not be a likeneſs between you and them as to your *fears* of *Death*; let a *Felix tremble* at the hearing of *Death* and *Judgment*; but let not the *Godly* hang down their *Heads*, but lift them up with *joy* and *rejoicing*, becauſe the *day* of their *Redemption draweth nigh*.

Thirdly, *Conſider this, to be afraid of Death, is to fear that which is but the Shadow and ſemblance of Death*: For to ſpeak ſtrictly, a *ſtate of Sin*, and *ſeparation of the Soul from God for Sin*, this is *Death* properly; but the *ſeparation of the Soul from the Body only*, is but the *Shadow of Death*. But O how ſeldom is it to ſee Men *trembling* becauſe of a *ſpiritual Death*, becauſe they are *dead* in *treſpaſſes* and *ſins*, though this be infinitely more *dreadful* than any *temporal Death* can be? And therefore to ſhew how full of *Woe* and *Miſery* this *Death* is, it is called *Damnation*; which is the *extremity* of all *Miſery*: This is that now to which this *ſpiritual Death tends*, and in which it will *terminate*. Hence therefore *Wicked Men* are ſaid to be condemned already, and the *wrath* of *God abides upon them*, and that they ſhall have their *Portion in that Lake which burns with Fire and Brimſtone, which is the ſecond Death*: This ſhall as certainly be their *Portion* as if they were there already. Therefore, *O Chriſtian*, if thou wilt *fear Death*, fear not that which is the *ſhadow* and the *appearance* of it, but fear that which is *Death* indeed; fear *Sin*, that is the *cauſe* both of the *firſt* and of the *ſecond Death* alſo; for if thou art *ſpiritually alive*, and raiſed from the *Death* of *Sin*, as all *true Believers* are, how *uncomely* a thing is it for thee to *fear* the *Shadow*, the *appearance* of an *evil* which cannot *hurt* thee, when thou art delivered from the *evil* it ſelf?

Fourthly, *Conſider, for a Chriſtian to fear that which is both common and certain, is an uncomely and unſuitable thing.* Afflictions in general are the *common lot* of all *God's People* in this *World*; but *Death* is that which is more *common*, becauſe it is that which befals all both *good* and *bad*; from other outward *Afflictions* there is a *poſſibility* that ſome may be free; or if they befal them, they may be delivered from under them again; but no Man can *eſcape Death. What Man is he that liveth*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, *and ſhall not ſee Death? ſhall he deliver his Soul from the hand of the Grave?* No, he cannot. Now *God* hath in *Mercy* made that to be *moſt common*, which is moſt *grievous* and *afflictive*, that he might thereby abate the terrour of it to us; and for any one to ſtrive againſt that which no *Man* can avoid or ſhun, argues that Man to be guilty of great folly. It is therefore very *unbecoming* thee, *O Chriſtian*, to *fear Death*, which is the *common way of all Fleſh*; yea, the *way* by which all the *People* of *God* enter into *Heaven* and *Happineſs*.

But to proceed a little farther in this *ſubject*, I ſhall in the next place endeavour to diſcover, that the *fears* of *Death* may not only be overcome for a time, but that it is poſſible for a *Chriſtian* to live without them, or above them; which though it be a high attainment, yet is it that to which *Grace* may reach, and that which many of the *People* of *God* do daily experience the comfort of.

Now by a Chriſtians living without the fear of Death, I mean a holy quietation and ſatisfaction of Soul, as to his future State of Happineſs founded upon the knowledge of his Intereſt in Chriſt, who hath overcome Death for all Believers, whereby the thoughts of its approach, doth neither diſtract nor diſquiet his Mind, ſo as to bereave him of that Peace and Tranquility of Soul that he enjoys in his Hopes and Expectations

of

of Heaven and Glory; but that he can with a holy Contentation and Satisfaction, reſign up his Soul unto God, whenſoever he calls for it.

Now that ſuch a *State* as this is *attainable*, I need ſay no more, than that this was one of the *ends* for which *Chriſt died, that by Death he might deſtroy him that had the power of Death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them, who by reaſon of the fear of Death, were all their life-times ſubject unto Bondage.* So that we being delivered out of the *hands* of all our *ſpiritual Enemies*, (whereof *Death* is one,) *we might ſerve him without fear in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all the days of our lives.* In this *Heavenly* frame was *Holy David*, when he ſaid, *though he walked through the Valley of the Shadow of Death he would fear no evil*: And ſo was St. *Paul*, when he tells us, he was *perſwaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, ſhould be able to ſeparate him from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* No wonder therefore that he could ſay, *I deſire to be diſſolved* (though it was by *Death*) *that he might be with Chriſt.* Thus to live above the *fears* of *Death*, will coſt much pains with our own *Hearts*, great diligence and circumſpection over our *ſelves* in all our *thoughts*, *words*, and *ways*; much watchfulneſs againſt all *Sin* and *Temptations*; for if we be remiſs, and through careleſsneſs, much more through preſumption, we fall into *Sin*, or neglect *Duty*, we ſhall ſoon be brought into *Bondage* and *Slavery* by the *fears* of *Death.*

If therefore, *O Chriſtian*, thou art one, who haſt overcome the *fears* of *Death*, and canſt live above them, thou may'ſt then *die* with courage, and leave this *World*, (though *Death* carry thee out of it,) with *joy* and *rejoicing*. And that thou may'ſt be able

to do so, let me briefly lay down two or three Directions.

First, *Have a great care of blotting thy Evidences for Heaven.* Darkness is an uncomfortable thing: And when *Christians* have been tampering with the works of *Darkness*, I mean some known *Sins* blotting their *Evidences*, which should discover their *Title* to *Heaven*, so that they cannot read them; what wonder is it while they are thus in the *dark*, that they are *afraid* to leave *Earth*, though it be to go to *Heaven*, because they know it not, for which they may thank themselves. *God* would not only have his *People go to Heaven certainly, but joyfully*; and therefore he hath made ample *provisions* for their *Peace* and *comfort*, both in *Life* and *Death*; so that they may not only have *good hope* but *strong consolation* through *Grace*; yea, may with a *holy exultation* of *Soul*, cry out, *Thanks be to God, who always causeth us to Triumph in Christ.* But now, if when *God* hath *spoken Peace*, they will turn again unto *folly*, by venturing upon *Sin*, they hereby *create* their own *sorrows*. *Fear* and *Consternation* of *Soul*, under the *apprehensions* of *Death*, come from themselves, they are their own *Tormenters*, and the *hinderers* and *disturbers* of their own *Peace* and *Joy*. And now if instead of being able to read their *Evidences* for *Heaven*, which should comfort them, they can only make wounding reflections upon their *Sins* that have blotted those *Evidences*, so that they walk in *darkness*, and the *fears* of *Death* continually afflict their *Souls*, they must thank themselves; for where there is the apprehensions of guilt lying upon any *Soul* unpardoned, there the thoughts of *death* will be terrible. This made *David*, when in his own apprehensions he was drawing nigh to the *Grave*, beg so importunately of *God*, that he would spare him

him a little longer, that he might *recover his ſtrength before he ſhould go away from hence and be ſeen no more.* If therefore when you come to *die*, you would leave this *World* cheerfully, you muſt live in the *World* conſciencioufly. Exerciſe your ſelves in all *things to keep Conſciences void of offence towards God and towards all Men.* Take heed of thoſe *black Fiends*, thy *Sins*, which will fright thy *Soul* in the *dark night* of *death*. If thy *Conſcience* be kept clean, thy *Evidences* for *Heaven* will be clear, and the *thoughts* of *death* comfortable. Many by venturing upon *Sin*, wound their *Souls*; and when *death* approaches, O then they ſtart back, and fain would they be ſpared a *little longer*. If *Conſcience* be raw with the guilt of any one *Sin*, a very *light affliction* (much more *death*) will make a *Man kick* and *fling*, and very unwilling to bear it; but where the *Spirit* is *ſound*, and the guilt of *Sin* taken off from the *Conſcience* by the *love* of *Chriſt*, *death* it ſelf will be *embraced* with *courage* and *joy*.

Secondly, *Deaden your Hearts and Affections to the World and all the comforts thereof.* The inordinate love of *worldly enjoyments*, and the imperfect love of *God* makes Men afraid to *die*. He whoſe *Heart* and *Affections* ſit looſe to the *World*, a ſmall matter will make him *willing* to leave it; but where the *Heart* is faſtned to it in *love* and *affection*, there will be no parting from it, without much reluctancy. He that hath laid up his *Heart* in *Heaven*, can *comfortably* think of laying down his *Body* in the *Grave*. Prize therefore *Heavenly things* above *Earthly*. Place your *Happineſs* in *ſpiritual things*; count them not only your *Food*, but your *Feaſt*; yea, make them your *recreation*. Were *Heaven* and *Heavenly things*, the continual ſolace and delight of our *Souls*, with what *joy* and *rejoicing* ſhould we leave *Earth* to go to *Heaven*.

Thirdly, *Familiarize the Thoughts of Death unto your Souls by frequent Meditation.* Doſt thou dread this *King* of *Terrours*? give not way to thy *Fears*; but bring *Death* often into thy *thoughts*; there is no ſuch hurt in it as thou imagineſt, nothing that ſhould terrifie a *Chriſtian.* Conſider a little, what it is that *Death* can do againſt thee, and what it is *Death* ſhall do for thee; and then tell me if thou haſt any cauſe to *fear* it; nay, tell me what cauſe thou haſt to *rejoice* in it: What is it *death* can do againſt thee? It may part thee and the *World*, thee and thy *Friends*; yea, it will part between thy *Soul* and thy *Body*, bringing it down into the duſt for a time, to become a *Feaſt* for *Worms*; and this is the worſt that *Death* can do againſt a *Believer.* But then conſider withal what *Death* ſhall do for thee, why it ſhall bring thee to a *Happineſs* ſo great in the enjoyment of *God*, as is unutterable for thee to expreſs, and unconceivable for thee to imagine; and this not for a time, but for *ever*; this *death* ſhall *do* for thee, *O Chriſtian*; and ſurely, if thou believeſt theſe things with a lively active *Faith*, thou canſt not any longer ſet *death* at a diſtance from thee, as an *Enemy* that thou art afraid of; but converſe with it familiarly as a *Friend*; yea, as thy beſt *Friend*, next unto *Jeſus Chriſt*. *Job* was thus familiar with *death*, Job 17. 14. *I have ſaid unto Corruption thou art my Father, and to the Worms ye are my Mother, and Siſter, and Brother.* Accuſtom thy ſelf therefore, *O Chriſtian*, unto the thoughts of *death*, and often think what a happy change thou ſhalt thereby undergo, even an entrance into *Heaven* and *Glory*: And then though the thoughts of *death* be full of *horrour* unto others; yet ſuch thoughts unto thee, will not only be profitable but exceeding delightful.

Fourth-

Fourthly, *If you would die with Courage and Joy, then often meditate upon the Death of Christ.* It is a common Argument and in the Mouths of moſt Perſons, that *all muſt die*; all that have lived before us have gone this way: But who is there that takes *courage* to follow others into the *Grave*, becauſe multitudes are gone thither before them? No, it is but a poor encouragement to die, becauſe other Men like our ſelves have died before us. But when a *Chriſtian* ſhall believingly remember and conſider, that *Jeſus Chriſt* died and was laid in the *Grave*, not only before us, but for us; and that he hath there conquered the King of *Terrours*, even upon his own *ground*; this makes a *Believer die* with a *holy courage*, and deſcend into the *Grave* with an *undaunted boldneſs*. But becauſe *Chriſtians* ſo ſeldom meditate on the *Death* of *Chriſt*, therefore are they ſo afraid of their own *death*. He that hath often converſed with *death*, in the *Meditation* of the *death* of *Chriſt*, (as *Believers* do or ſhould do,) cannot be afraid to *die*, if he knows what the *death* of *Chriſt* means which he hath meditated upon. Savingly to know that *Chriſt* is gone before us in *death*, is not only enough to make us cheerful, but to make us alive in *death*. He that by *Faith* contemplates that *Chriſt* is gone before him by *dying*, and that in *dying* he *died* for him; and that he alſo is *alive*, and *lives* for him; with what *abundant joy* and *conſolation*, may he *depart* out of this *World*.

CHAP. VI.

Objections againſt Death, and Unwillingneſs to die anſwered. Conſolations againſt the Fear of Death in general. Comforts againſt the Death of Friends and Relations in particular. The Saints great Gain by Death, propounded as a Motive and Encouragement unto Chriſtians againſt the Fears of it.

THough it be the *Duty* of *Chriſtians* to *die willingly*, yea with *Courage* and *Joy* to commit their *Souls* into the hands of *God*; yet are there many, who *cannot overcome* their *fears* of *death*, ſo as to be *willing* to *die*; and the *Reaſons* thereof are ſuch as theſe.

First, ſay ſome, *We could be content to die, had we but attained unto ſixty or ſeventy years as ſome Men do; but alas, we are young, in the prime of our years, and in the ſtrength of our Days: The Sun of our Life hath not been long up; and muſt it go back, and decline, yea and ſet alſo already? We are willing to die hereafter; but O that God would ſpare us a little longer.*

To this, *I anſwer*, theſe are *fooliſh* pityings of thy ſelf: For if it pleaſe the *Great God*, in whoſe *Hands* thy *life* is, thy *breath*, and *all thy ways*, that thou muſt *die* young, haſt thou any *Injuſtice* to charge him withal? What *wrong* hath he done thee in *cutting ſhort* the *thread* of thy *life*? Thou haſt *forfeited* thy *life* into his *Hands long* ſince; and

and if *ſparing Mercy* hath continued the *Forfeiture*, and given thee a *ſpace* and *time* of *Repentance*, though not ſo *long* as thou deſireſt; yet more than thou *deſerveſt*, yea and more than he *owed* thee: Thou ſhouldſt therefore rather be *thankful* for it, and with all *diligence improve* it, than *repine* that it is ſo *ſhort*, or be *unwilling* to part with it ſo *ſoon*: For though *long life* may be a *Bleſſing*, yea is *promiſed* ſo; yet if thou art a *Believer*, a *ſhort life* ſhall be no *Curſe* unto thee. To a *pardoned Soul*, all things are *Bleſſings*, yea *Death* it ſelf; for the *bitterneſs* of it is taken away. Righteous *Abel* though young *dies*, and *dies* by *Murder*; whilſt wicked *Cain* the *Murderer* of him, *lives* ſome *hundreds* of *years* after. When *God* who is the great *Lord* of *Time*, and *meaſures* out to *every one* what *number* of *days* they ſhall *live*, hath *appointed* unto thee the *day and hour* of thy *departure*; though the *days* of thy *life* be but as a *ſpan long*, compared with the *lives* of others; yet is it in *vain* to contend with *God*; thou may'ſt *trouble* thy ſelf, and make thy *life* uncomfortable, but thou can'ſt not alter *God's Decrees*; for he *is of one Mind*, as *Job* ſpeaks, *and who can turn him?* That is, none can; and therefore chearfully *yield* up thy ſelf unto his Will.

But poſſibly thou wilt ſay, I would live longer, that I might ſerve and honour God more.

If thou art *ſincere* in what thou ſayeſt, it is well; but if *God* will take the *Will* for the *Deed*, and *accept* of what thou haſt done already, and *reward* thee with the *eternal Enjoyment* of himſelf immediately, haſt thou any *Cauſe* to complain? What if thou getteſt to *Heaven* twenty, or thirty years before thy *Father* or *Brother*, or many other of thy Acquaintance, that are travelling with their Faces *Heaven-ward*, and have been ſo many years already;

ready? Will it *grieve* thee that thou art *got* to *Heaven*, too *soon*, where if thou art a *Christian* thou always haſt a deſire to be? I aſſure thee thy *Friends* and *Relations*, though they may not *envy* thy *Happineſs*; yet if they had but once *taſted* the Sweetneſs thereof, their *longings* after it would be ſo great, that they would *continually cry* out, *Oh Time haſten and flee away, that we may come to the full Enjoyment of our longed for Happineſs.* Hath *God* caſt thee, O *Chriſtian*, upon a Bed of Pain and Sorrow, and is it likely to prove thy *Death-bed*? Are there ſuch *Symptoms of thy departure*, that *God* ſeems to tell thee *plainly* thou ſhalt *die*, and not *live*? O do not *reply* and *ſay*, It is too *ſoon* yet, thou art too *young* to *die* and go to *Heaven*: What though *God* call thee to *Glory* and *Bleſſedneſs* ſooner than thou expecteſt, yet *ſhame* not thy ſelf, *grieve* not others that behold thee; much more, *diſparage* not the *Happineſs* of *Heaven*, nor of that *God* who is to be *eternally enjoyed* there, by thy *unwillingneſs* to go thither?

Secondly, *May ſome ſay, we ſhall have ſo many Evils to encounter with, that will create us ſo much fear and trouble, and withal ſo many Pains will befall us in a dying hour, that we cannot tell how to think of Death, we are ſo affrighted at it.*

To this I anſwer: It is true a *Chriſtian* cannot expect to *die* without *Aſſaults* of *Enemies*, nor without the *Pains* of *Death*; but yet a *Chriſtian* need not *fear*, nor be unwilling to *die* for all this.

Firſt, One *Diſcouragement may be the Apprehenſion of the guilt of Sin, which they then fear will ſtare their Conſciences in the Face; and how to bear up under it they know not.* But know, O *Chriſtian*, if *Sin* hath loſt its *Throne* in thy *Soul*;

if

if it hath no Intereſt in thy *Affections*, ſo that it is not embraced with any *Love* or *Delight*, it ſhall never *ruine* or *condemn* thee. For it is a certain Truth where *Sin* doth not *rule*, there *Sin* ſhall never *damn*. He that by the *Grace* and *Spirit* of *Chriſt* is enabled to *mortifie* his *Sins*, and all ſinful *Affections* and *Inclinations* thereunto; and by a *penitential Converſion* of Soul, from *Sin* unto *God*, hath forſaken his *ſinful ways*; all his former *Provocations*, though never ſo great, loſe their *damning* Power: For where *Sin* is once in the Exerciſe of *godly Sorrow confeſſed* unto *God*, it is by him *graciouſly pardoned*. Nay the *Apoſtle* tells us, in 1 *John* 1. 9. *If we confeſs our Sins, God is not only* merciful and gracious, but he will be *juſt* and *righteous to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs*. And what greater ſecurity can a *Chriſtian* deſire for his *ſupport*, than the *Truth* and *Faithfulneſs* of that *God*, who is *Truth* it ſelf and cannot *lie*?

Secondly, *There is another thing that may ſtartle a Chriſtian's Confidence, and make him unwilling to die; and that is the fears of the Aſſaults of Satan, who will do what he can, not only to hinder our future Happineſs, but to interrupt our comfortable paſſage through Death.*

It is true the *Devil* will be very *active* in a *dying hour*. But be not *diſcouraged*; give not place to his *Temptations*: For where *Sin* is pardoned as it is to all *Believers*; What hath the *Devil* wherewith to ſhake a *Chriſtian's Confidence*, or to *undermine* his *Hopes* and *Expectance*; but what is built upon *Lies* and *Falſhood*. If therefore you will give *Credit* unto this *Father of Lies*, when he endeavours to weaken thoſe *certain Aſſurances* the great *God* hath given you of his reſolved Deſigns to *ſave* ſuch

as

as you are; and ſo come to be *diſturbed* and *confounded* in your Thoughts about your preſent and future *State*, you muſt *blame* your ſelves. Till therefore it can be *proved*, that *Sin* may be *repented* of and not *pardoned*; that *Sin* may be *pardoned*, and yet the *Soul periſh* and undone; till *God* or *Chriſt* prove either *forgetful*, *unable*, or *falſe*, be not *dejected*. It is the great Comfort of a *Chriſtian*, that the *Devil* hath no other *Arguments* to *diſquiet* a *Believer* with in a *dying hour*, but what are bottom'd on theſe groſs Abſurdities. And though *Satan* may be furious in his laſt *Aſſaults*, yet, O *Chriſtian*, remember when thou art *walking* through the *Valley* of the *ſhadow* of *death*, thou *walkeſt* not alone: In that *dark* and *gloomy Valley*, *God* hath his *Rod* and his *Staff* in readineſs for thy *Aſſiſtance* and *Encouragement*; and know further, O *believing Soul*, that *Chriſt* our *compaſſionate* High Prieſt, knows what it is to *die*, and hath been acquainted with the *Subtilties* and *Fury* of the *Tempter*, by ſmart Experience, and his *ſympathy* hath taught him *pity*; and becauſe he is our *Head*, he will not *forget* his *Members* under their *afflicting Temptations* in that hour: For though he be in *Heaven*, he retains the ſame *Bowels* and *Affections* now in his *glorified State*, which he had here upon *Earth*; and doth *continually* improve his *Interceſſion* in *Heaven*, for the *benefit*, *ſecurity* and *relief* of his *afflicted* People in their greateſt *dangers* and *Extremities*.

If *any poor Believers ſhall here object the pains of Death, as being ſo great, and to their apprehenſions inſupportable; and therefore they are unwilling to die;*

Let them conſider, that they are but *ſhort* and *ſuddain*; and though they are made by *God* our *neceſſary paſſage* into *Glory*, yet they ſhall *ſoon* be

over,

over and forgot, when the *Soul* by *death* is ſet free from the *Body*, and takes its flight into the *Preſence* of *God* in *Heaven*. And alas, what are the *dying pains*, and *groaning gaſps* of *departing* Saints, compared to the *Gripes* and *Stingings* of an *awakened Conſcience* for *ſin*; and the *horrid fears* of the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of *God*, which though they are not *ſeen* by others becauſe *inward*; yet are they the *frequent* and *daily Tormenting Exerciſes* of ſinners, both in *Life* and *Death*. And though the *pains* of the *Godly* in a *dying hour*, may ſometimes be *afflictive* unto *Senſe*; yet it often happens through the *Goodneſs* and *Mercy* of *God* to them, that their *Fears* in *Life exceed* their *Pains* in *Death*; and this *King* of *Terrors* doth not *gripe* ſo *hard*, nor *ſtab* ſo *painfully*, as we are apt to think: and if he doth, *God* many times *comes in* with ſuch *ſtrong Conſolations* upon *departing Souls*. in the *Manifeſtations* of his *Love* to, and *Preſence* with them, as turns their *Fears* and *Sorrows* into *Joy* and *Rejoycing*.

But if *God* ſhould not manifeſt himſelf thus *Comfortably* unto ſome for their *Support*: but leave them to the *feeling* of their *Fears* by undergoing great *pains* in *Death*; yet as ſoon as the *ſtroke* is given, the *pains* are *gone*, and their *fears* are over. How *quickly* do the *firſt openings* of that *Eternal Morning ſwallow* up all the *Remembrances* of our *dying ſorrows*. O when the *Joys* and *Viſions* of our *God* invade and *Exerciſe* our *departed Souls*; then comes the *great* and *welcome Pledge* of our *Eternal Conqueſt* of this *laſt Enemy*, and after a ſhort *ſleep* of *Bodies* in the *Duſt*, (whilſt *Souls* return to *God*) the *Trump* will *ſound*, the *Lord* will *come*, the *World* ſhall *periſh*, or be *refin'd* by *Flames*, and the *Dead* ſhall *riſe* and *die* no more; and then as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *ſhall we be ever with the Lord*.

But

But some may say, we could willingly die, but that we know not what will become of us hereafter; we cannot tell what our future State will be, and therefore we are afraid of Death. The desires we have of our Eternal Happiness puts us upon hoping the best, but our doubts and fears are so many, we cannot but tremble to think of our departure, because we are under such uncertainties, whither we shall go when Death takes us hence.

To this I *Answer*, who art thou that makest these *Objections*? Either thou art a *wicked Man*, or one that truly *feareſt God*. If thou art a *Wicked Man*, under the *guilt* of thy *Sins*, and in an *unpardoned State*, I cannot wonder that thou art *afraid* of *Death*, nor can I blame thee that thou art *unwilling* to *die*: Thou hast cause enough to make thee *fear* and *tremble*. For there is nothing in *Death*, or what is to come *after* it, if thou understandest thy *danger aright*, but what might fill thee with the *greatest Terror* and *Consternation imaginable*. Whatever thou *feareſt*, is to come; and may come quickly for ought thou knowest: is *infinitely* far *greater* and *worse* than what thou canst now *imagine*: what thou *feelest* or *feareſt*, are but the beginning of thy *Sorrows*: nay all the *Miseries* thou canst meet with in *Life*, and all the *pains* that thou canst *suppose* to be in *Death*, fall infinitely *short* of those unconceivable *Horrours*, and *Miseries* that are the *Portion* of *Sinners* in the next *Life*. And for any *Comfort*, or *Relief* against *Death* whilst thou art in thy *Sinful State*, there is nor can be none. Thy *work* therefore, must be speedily to get into *Christ*; labour to have thy *Sins Pardoned*. Follow *God* with *earnest Cries*, *Tears*, and *Importunities* of *Soul*, that thy *sinful Nature* may be *changed* and *Sanctified*: and then let *Death* come when it will; though thou *die* under never such

fears

fears and *uncertainties* as to thy *future State*, yet *Eternal Happineſs* attends thee, and when *Death* hath once cloſed the *Eyes* of thy *Body*; the *Eye* of thy *Soul* will quickly be opened to thy everlaſting *Joy* and *Conſolation*.

If thou art one that truly feareſt God, but yet art unwilling to die, becauſe thou art uncertain, how it may go with thee as to thy Eternal State. Why then *examine* thine own heart, whether theſe *fears* do not proceed from thine own *careleſſneſs*? God hath vouchſafed to thee many *means* and *opportunities* for the encreaſing thy *Knowledge*, for the ſtrengthening thy *Faith*, for the enlarging thy *Love*, for the confirming thy *Hope*, for the eſtabliſhing thy *Soul* in the *ways* of *God*, and to provoke and ſtir thee up unto the continual *Exerciſe* of *Grace*, that hereby thou mighteſt grow up into ſome *Knowledge* and *Aſſurance* of his *Love* towards thee through *Chriſt*, and ſo mayeſt groundedly conclude the *certainty* of thy *future Happineſs*. But thou haſt been *ſloathful*, not putting forth thy ſelf with all *diligence* in the improving the *Helps* and *Advantages* God hath put into thy hands, and therefore thou art ſo in the *Dark*, and under *fears*; how it may go with thy *Soul* for ever, if this be thy caſe, go *humble* thy *Soul* before *God*, lie *low* in his preſence, beg earneſtly the manifeſtations of his *Love* and *Favour* towards thee: And for time to come, put forth the *endeavours* of thy *Soul* unto the utmoſt, in the uſe of all the means *God* vouchſafes unto thee for the removing thy *Fears*, ſatisfying thy *Doubts*, encreaſing thy *Knowledge*, confirming thy *Faith* and *Hope* in a future State of *Happineſs* provided for thee; and how *ſoon* God may *come* in, whilſt thou art thus *humbling* thy ſelf before him, and *manifeſt* his loving kindneſs unto thy *Support* and *Comfort*, thou knoweſt not. But however, if he ſhould (for ſome

Reaſons

Reasons thou canst not at present *apprehend*) leave thee to *walk* under thy *Doubts* and *Fears* still; yet if thou art *sincere* one that hath the *Grace* of *God* in *Truth* in thy *Soul*, I would say thus much, that these *Fears* and *Jealousies* about the attainment of the *Happiness* of *Heaven*, if it be a *Distemper* as it is become so *natural* to us all; that it is with much *difficulty* cured in this *present* State, but yet it may be with great *diligence* and *industry* of *Soul*. But for thy *Comfort*, O *doubting Believer*, know; though these *Doubts* and *Fears* are *sinful*, and thou dost thereby *provoke* God; yet they shall not *prejudice* thy *future Happiness*, though they may and do often *hinder* thy *present Peace* and *Comfort*. For certainly *God* will never *Damn* a *Believing Soul*, let such a one *think* what he will of himself. For though thou art not *assured* that thou art his, yet *God* knows all those that are his, and not one of them shall *Eternally* perish. Suppose therefore, that thou shouldst *die* under *Doubts* and *Jealousies*, and thy *Soul* should go out of this *World*, sitting in a *Cloud* of *Tears*, this hinders not, but it may *arise* in a *fair* morning of *Glory*. *Heaven* only is a *place privileged* from *Tears* and *Fears*.

But may some Soul say, I am not willing to die, because I fear I have no Grace, or at least it is but little that I have; for when I compare my self with others, the most I can say of my self is this: that all my Grace and Holiness lies in a Love to Grace, and in a desire after Holiness; I hope through Grace I can say, that there is nothing in all the World, if I might have my choice, that I desire more than to be like my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But O how short do I fall, both of my Rule and of my Desires: my walkings in the ways of God are very uneven and unconstant; the corruptions of my heart are so great and so frequently breaking forth,

forth, by Fleſhly Affections and Worldly Deſires, that if there be any Grace within me, it is very hard to diſcern it by reaſon of the ſin that doth accompany and go along with it; and how then ſhould ſuch a one as I dare to think of dying. Were Grace ſtrong and vigorous, could I ſenſibly find the ſtrength, encreaſe and growth of it in a tendency towards perfection, I could then think of dying with ſome courage. But the weakneſs and imperfection of Grace much diſcourageth me, that I cannot with any willingneſs and chearfulneſs entertain the thoughts of it in my Soul.

To this I *Anſwer*, let not the *thoughts* of *Death* diſcourage thee, O *weak Chriſtian*, for *Death* can no more, ſhall no more hinder the *Happineſs* of a *weak Believer*, than of a *ſtrong Believer*. It is true, a *ſtrong Faith* may carry thee more *comfortably* to *Heaven*, but a *weak Faith* will carry thee as *truly* to *Heaven*: For *Faith* ſaves not as it is *ſtrong* or *weak*, but as it is *true*; and a *weak Faith* is *true Faith* as well as a *ſtrong Faith*. *Grace* and *Holineſs* is of *Abſolute* neceſſity for every *Chriſtian*; for without them it is *impoſſible* to *pleaſe God*, or to *enjoy* him. For as the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *Without Holineſs no man ſhall ever ſee the Lord*. But yet all *Chriſtians* are not *equally Holy*; there is a *meaſure*, or *ſtature* to which all *Chriſtians* are *appointed in Chriſt Jeſus*: but this *meaſure*, or *ſtature*, is not the *ſame* to every *Chriſtian*: ſome *Chriſtians* have a longer term of *Life* than others; ſome have more *means* and *opportunities* than others; and ſome have *greater Parts* and *Abilities* than others. Now *God* is not a *ſevere Maſter*, *expecting to reap where he hath not ſown, or to gather where he hath not ſtrowed*: God doth not *look* for what he doth not *give*, where he *gives* more, he *expects* the *more*; but where he *gives leſs*, he *expects* the *leſs*.

Chriſtians

Chriſtians to whom *God* hath given *great parts* and *Abilities* with great *means* and *opportunities* of *Grace* even unto *Old Age*, from ſuch *God expects* much, *becauſe* he hath given *much*. Ordinary *degrees* of *Grace* muſt not ſerve their turns; but they muſt *tranſcend* others in *Faith*, *Love*, *Humility*, and all other *Graces*, contending for the attaining unto the *State of the Reſurrection from the dead*. But now for others, whoſe *parts* have been *low*; whoſe *means* and *opportunities* are *ſmall*, and their time in the World but ſhort: *God* doth not expect that the *Beauty* of their *Grace* ſhould *ſhine* ſo *Glorioufly* as others. Say not therefore O *doubting Chriſtian*, that thou *knoweſt* not, *believeſt* not, *loveſt* not, *delighteſt* not in *God*, to that *degree* that others do. It may be thou doſt not; but if thy *Knowledge*, *Faith*, *Love* and *Delight* be not ſo great as others, yet thy *Grace* may be as *true* and as *real* as any others. In a *Star* there is as true *light* as in the *Sun*, though there be more *light* in the *Sun*. And thy *Grace* though *little* and *weak*, is *true Grace*; though it be not ſo *much*, nor ſo *ſtrong* as others. Quiet thy ſelf therefore, O *drooping Soul*; for ſuch may be the *weakneſs* of thy *parts*, ſuch the *ſmallneſs* of the *means* of *Grace* that thou *enjoyeſt*, and ſo few the *Talents* thou art intruſted withal, that *God* expects not ſo much from thee as he doth from *others*: And if the *Great God* will *accept* of, *yea Reward* the *little* that thou haſt, why ſhouldeſt thou be *troubled* or *diſquieted*? *God doth not deſpiſe the day of ſmall things*, and why ſhouldeſt thou? A *little Grace*, yea the *leaſt* of *Grace* is *too good* to be *caſt away*. Though thou couldeſt not be *Saved* without a *ſtrong Saviour*, and therefore *Chriſt* is ſaid to *travail* in the *greatneſs* of his *Strength mighty* to *Save*: yet a *little Faith* laying hold upon this *ſtrong Saviour*, will keep thee from *periſhing*:

periſhing: be not therefore diſcouraged, O *Chriſtian*, fear not *Death*, though thy *Grace* be *weak* and *imperfect*, and ſo may not *give* thee that *comfort* in *Death* that thou *expecteſt*, yet ſhall it as truly *overcome Death* through the *ſtrength* of *Chriſt*, as the *ſtrongeſt Grace*; and though *Death* kill thee, yet it ſhall not *hurt* thee; nay it ſhall make for thy *Eternal Advantage*, for it ſhall be the *ending* of all thy *Fears*, but the *beginning* of thy *Eternal Joys* and *Rejoycings*.

But may ſome poor Soul ſay, I want the aſſurance of the Love and Favour of God, and this makes me unwilling to die; were I but aſſured my ſins are pardoned, and God reconciled to my Soul through Jeſus Chriſt, I could then chearfully ſubmit my ſelf to the ſtroke of Death; but this is that which affrighteens me, I fear leſt God is mine Enemy, and then I am ſure death cannot be my Friend, and how then ſhall I dare to think of dying in this Condition?

To this I *Anſwer*; art thou under ſome *fears* and *apprehenſions* that *God* is not thy *reconciled Father* in *Jeſus Chriſt*, though I cannot *blame* thee that thou art *fearful* of *dying* under *ſuch apprehenſions*; yet I muſt *blame* thee for thy former *negligence*, that thou haſt not made this *ſure* to thy ſelf in the *time* of thy *health* and *ſtrength*. Next to *dying* in a *State* of *impenitency*, and the *Horrors* of *Conſcience*, under the *fore taſts* of *Hell* and *Wrath*: *dying* under the *apprehenſions* and *fears* of *God's* being our *Enemy*, is the moſt *dreadful* condition that can be, for though our *future ſafety* and *happineſs depends* not upon our *aſſurance* that *God* is at *peace* with us, yet our *preſent Comfort* doth: and it is all one as to the *preſent quietation* and *ſatisfaction* of our *Souls* when we are a *dying*, whether *God* be our *Enemy* or no; if he will not

ſmile

ſmile upon us when our *Souls* are a-*departing*; but leave us in that *hour*, as our laſt *puniſhment* for ſome *ſin* that he hath been provoked by; to *breath* forth our Souls under the *apprehenſions* of his *Wrath* and *Diſpleaſure*. *Aſſurance* of the *Love* and *Favour* of *God*, to know that our *ſins* are *Pardoned*, and we *accepted* in the *Beloved*; to know the *joyful ſound*, to have the *light* of *God's Countenance* lifted up upon our *Souls*, when we are *paſſing through the gloomy Valley of the ſhadow of Death*. For *God* not only to *Love* us, but to tell us that he *Loves us*, and to *manifeſt* it to us by *ſhedding* abroad his *Love* into our *Hearts* by the *Holy Ghoſt*, ſo as to *fill* us with *Joy* and *Peace* by *believing* this is *Life*, nay this *loving kindneſs of God is better* than *Life*; it is the *Suburbs* of *Heaven*; yea, it is *Heaven* it ſelf, for it is *as much* of *Heaven* as we can *deſire* or *contain* of *Heaven* whilſt we are on this ſide *Heaven*. On the *contrary* to be *doubting* of the *Love* and *Favour* of *God*, to *fear* he is our *Enemy*, that we are yet in our *Sins*, *liable* unto the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of *God*, this is very *ſad* and *uncomfortable*; yea, ſome *reſemblance* of *Hell* it ſelf; eſpecially if *Conſcience* be awakned, and theſe *Apprehenſions* and *Jealouſies* continue upon us under the *approaches* of *Death*: this therefore muſt needs be very *Afflictive* to a poor *doubting Soul*. But yet be not *diſcouraged*; for it is the *Condition* of many of *God's Children* for a long time to remain *doubtful*, both as to their *preſent State* in *Grace*, and their *future State* of *Glory*. There are *Believers* of *divers growths* in the *Church* of *God*, *Fathers*, *Young-men*, *Children*, and *Babes*. And as it is in moſt *Families* in the *World*, there are more *Babes*, and *Children*, than *grown Men*: So is it in the *Church* of *God*, there are more *weak* and *doubting Chriſtians*, than *ſtrong Men* who are *grown*

grown up unto a full *Aſſurance*. But remember the *Promiſe* is made to the *being* of *Faith*, not to the *Knowledge* and *Evidence* of it; to *Faith* as it is a *true Faith*, not to *Faith* as it is a *ſtrong Faith*. *Heaven* may be *ſure* to thoſe, who yet in their *own Apprehenſions* may not be *aſſured* of *Heaven*. *Live* therefore by *Faith*, O *Chriſtian*, when thou canſt not *live* by *Sence* and *Feeling*; and know that, that *God* who hath given thee a *true Judgment* to *value Jeſus Chriſt*, and a *Sanctified Will* to *chooſe* him, with *ardent* and *ſtrong Affections* to *Love* him and *deſire* him, and *ſupported* thee under the *fears* of *ſin* and *guilt*, will come in with *aſſurance* alſo, if he ſees it *good* for thee: And know alſo for thy *Comfort*, that many of *God's People* have languiſhed a long time under the *want* of *aſſurance*, and ſome of them moſt part of their lives, yea, and in their laſt *Sickneſs*, and *almoſt* to their *laſt gaſp*, and then *God* hath *Graciouſly* come in and *Sealed* up his *Love* and *Favour* to their *Souls*, whereby they have been *filled with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory*. Never *fear death* therefore, for want of *aſſurance*, for that is the moſt *uſual time* when *God* doth *beſtow* it upon his *People*. But if he doth not *then* give thee this *aſſurance*, yet he will put under his *Everlaſting Arms* that ſhall *bear* thee up notwithſtanding all thy *fears* and *doubts* and carry thee *ſafe* through the *pains* of *Death* into *Glory*, where thou ſhalt have as much of the *Love* of *God*, and of the *Aſſurance* thereof as thou canſt *wiſh* or *deſire*.

But may ſome ſay, were we prepared to die, we could willingly embrace Death whenſoever God ſends it. But alas, our State and Condition is ſuch, that we fear we are not fit for Death, and how then can we Comfortably think of dying?

I Anſwer, if this be the *true caſe* of thy *Soul*, as thy *Fears* ſuggeſt, that thou art not *really prepared* for

for *Death*, thy *Condition* is *ſad* and *dangerous*, and if *Death* ſeize upon thee in this *State*, thou art *irrecoverably* miſerable, and all the *Comfort* that can be given unto thee is this, that yet there is a *poſſibility* of *Salvation*, as yet there is ſome *hope* becauſe thou art not *actually* under the *power* of *Death*; *God* is yet *waiting*, *time* is yet *lengthened* out, *ſpace* is yet *granted* to you to *prepare* to meet this *King* of *Terrors*: And in the Improvement of theſe *lies* all your *Hopes* for *Heaven* and *Eternity*. You have hitherto been great *loiterers* in your *great work*, *ſpent* much of your *precious* time to little purpoſe, *neglected* many *opportunities*, *loſt* many *warnings* vouchſafed to you: Now therefore be *diligent*: What was the whole *time* of your *Life* given you for, but to *prepare* for *Death*, and have you *lived* ſo many years in the World to prepare for your *laſt* hour, and are you ſtill both *unwilling* and *unfit* to *die*? What have you been *doing*? wherefore is it that you have *lived*? have you had any *buſineſs* of *greater concernment* to mind, than to be *prepared* for your *latter end*? O fooliſh *Souls* and unwiſe, who elſe would *run* ſuch *deſperate hazards*? *God* hath *frequently* told you that you muſt *die*, how often hath *Death* by *God*'s appointment come among your *Acquaintance* and *Relations*, and ſometimes into your own *Habitations*, and ſnatched away many before your *Eyes*; how often hath it been told you, ſuch a *Friend* is *dead* in ſuch a *place*, and ſuch an *Acquaintance* in another *place*, and ſuch a *Relation* in ſuch a *Family*? And by all theſe *warnings* will you not believe that you are *Mortal*, and ſhall ſhortly *die* as well as others? If you do *believe* it, where is the *prepartion* you make for it, when you are ſtill *crying out*, O you are not *fit* to *die*? was not this your Language long ſince? how many years hath it been heard from you?

When

When *God* hath viſited you with Sickneſs not once but often, and you were going down into the *Chambers* of the *Grave* in your *own apprehenſions*: did you not then *cry out*, Lord I am not *ready*, *O ſpare me yet a little longer*, that I may *recover my ſtrength*, yet once *again*, before *I go away from hence and ſhall be ſeen no more*; and *God* was nigh to your *Voice*, and *heard* your *Cry* and *granted* your *Requeſt*, and *tried* you once and again a *little longer*; and what are you not yet *fit* to *die*? whoſe *fault* is it? ſurely your own. And if *Death* take you away in this *State*, you will juſtly *bear* the *blame* and *puniſhment* of it for ever. Whoever thou art into whoſe hands theſe lines may fall, *preſently* put thy ſelf upon the *Trial*, how it is with thee, and endeavour to put the *Queſtion* out of *doubt*, think not that *God* muſt *wait* upon you whilſt you *dally* and *trifle* away your *time*: haſt thou been *careleſs* and *negligent* formerly, be ſo no longer; O *ſearch* and *examine* thy *Soul*, and follow the *ſearch cloſe* and *home* to thy *Conſcience* till thou come *fully* and *clearly* to *diſcern* how it is with thee; *idle* not away thy *time* one *moment* longer, but begin this *day*, *delay* not thy *Preparations* for *Death* until to *morrow*, for thou knoweſt not what a *day* may *bring* forth. What is requiſite to make thy *preparations* ſuch as may render *Death Comfortable* in thy thoughts and *Expectations*, I have already laid down in the third Chapter of this Treatiſe to which I refer thee.

But notwithſtanding what hath been ſpoken, *becauſe there may yet be ſome fears ariſing in the hearts of ſome troubled Chriſtian's, which they cannot get the Victory over, ſo as readily and willingly to ſubmit unto Death, I ſhall in the next place propoſe ſome Conſolatory Conſiderations for their Encouragement and ſupport againſt a dying hour. As,*

First,

First, *Consider that Gracious Promise God hath made unto his People in all Ages, that he will never leave them nor forsake them.* And this is a *Cordial* so full of *Divine Consolation*, that if *Christians* did but *believe* and *live* up to the *Comfort* that might be drawn from it, they would not *fear*, much less sink under any *Affliction* that can befall them. It was no small *Trial* St. *Paul* was under, when after his being *rapt* up into the *third Heavens*, where *he heard things that were unspeakable, or impossible to be uttered:* he had given him a *Thorn* in the *Flesh*, the *Messenger* of *Satan* to *Buffet* him; upon which he makes his *Prayer* thrice, that it might be removed from him. What *Answer* now doth he receive from *God*? why the *Thorn* remains in his *Flesh still*, and the *Messenger* of *Satan* continues to *Buffet* him; but yet he hath a *better return* to his *Prayer*, even the making *good* of this *Gracious Promise* to him, that *God* would not *leave* him nor *forsake* him: for says *God*, *My Grace shall be sufficient for thee, my Strength is made perfect in Weakness.* And therefore the *Apostle* crys out in the deepest of his *Afflictions*, with *Transports of Joy*, most gladly *therefore will I Glory in my Infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me*; yea, says he, *I take pleasure in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in Necessities, in Persecutions, in Distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong; for I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me*, 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. Thus for *God* to stand by his *People*, and to *strengthen* them under their *Afflictions*, is more than for *God* to *deliver* them out of them, and he always doth the one or the other, if he *deliver* not his *People* out of *afflictions*, he always *strengthens* them under them; and the *greater* the *Afflictions* of any of his *People* are, the more is his *Power* seen in *supporting* them, because they

they then moſt need it. Therefore, *ſays God*, when thou *paſſeſt through the Waters*, *I will be with thee*, *they ſhall not overflow thee*; *and when thou walkeſt thorough the Fire*, *thou ſhalt not be burnt*, *Eſai.* 43. 2. Take *Courage* therefore, *O Chriſtian*, be not *afraid* of any *Affliction*; be not *affrighted*, no not at the *ſight* of *death it ſelf*; though thou ſee'ſt it is a *narrow* paſſage, a *way* beſet with *Briars* and *Thorns*; though it be a *ſtrait Gate* for *Fleſh* and *Blood* to paſs through, yet *fear* not; for it is the *Gate* of *Heaven*, the *way* that leads unto *Glory*. Be not *afraid* therefore to *walk* in *the valley of the ſhadow of death*; though *love* of *Friends*, and *ſtrength* of *Body fail* thee, yet *fear* not, for *God* will be with thee, his *Rod* and his *Staff* will *ſupport* and *comfort* thee, he will *be your God and your Guide*, not only *unto death*, but *for ever* and *ever*; for he will *never*, *never*, *never leave his* People, nor *forſake* them, till he hath brought them to the *eternal enjoyment* of himſelf in *Glory*.

Secondly, *Wouldſt thou*, *O Chriſtian*, *be comforted and ſupported againſt death*, *then much and often meditate upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. *Now* though *every thing* in *Chriſt*, and every thing done by *Chriſt*, be *exceeding ſweet* and *precious*; *for unto them that believe*, *he is precious*. Chriſt, and whole Chriſt is *precious*; for there is *nothing* in him, or done by him, that we can tell how to want. But yet I ſhall inſtance in ſome few things more particularly, which may be of great Uſe unto a *Chriſtian* to *meditate* upon for his ſupport againſt the hour of *Death*: As,

Firſt, *Meditate often upon the Death and Sufferings of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. Now though in general theſe were ſo *great*, that they exceed all our *Expreſſions* and *Apprehenſions*; yet how willingly and patiently did he undergo them all; both from

God and *Man*, in his *Body* and in his *Soul*? His *Body* was *racked* and *tortured* in all the parts of it; but especially in those parts wherein the sense is most *quick*; and therefore his *Pain* and *Anguish* was most *afflicting*. They *digged* or *pierced* my *hands* and my *feet*, saith the Psalmist of him, *Psal.* 22. 16. He *suffered* in his *Soul* also; for he *conflicted* with the *wrath* of an *angry God*, which was *impress'd* upon him in such a *dreadful* manner; that had he not had the *strength* of the *Deity* to *support* him, it had certainly *overwhelm'd* him, and *ground* him to *Powder*: For it was *pure Wrath* without the least *mixture* of *sparing Mercy*, the *great God* bates him nothing. That's a sweet *Scripture*, Rom. 8. 32. *God spared not his own Son*: And it was well for us that he did not; for had he *spared* him, he had not *spared* us. His *Death* was not *common* and *ordinary*, but a *Death* by *Crucifixion*; he *humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the death of the Cross*, which was a *violent death*, considered in it self; and therefore he is said to be *cut off out of the Land of the Living*, though in respect of himself it was voluntary; and therefore he tells us I lay down my Life of my self, *John* 10. 18. And indeed *Christ* must either *die* a *voluntary Death*, or none at all; *partly* because there was no *Sin* in him to deserve *Death*, and *partly* because otherwise his *death* had not been a *Sacrifice* acceptable and satisfactory unto *God* for us; for that which *died* of it self was never *offered* in *Sacrifice*, but that which was *slain* in its full force and strength. This *death* of *Christ* was also full of *exquisite Pain* and *Torture*; and therefore when he was going to *encounter* with it, he *screws* up his *Request* to his *Father* to the highest pitch, *Matth.* 26. 39. *Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me*. It was also a *death* full of *shame*, that

which

which nothing is more *cutting* to an *ingenious, noble Spirit*. And truly in this reſpect, the *Thieves* that ſuffered with him, *fared* better than he; for they had no *Taunts*, *Reproaches*, and *Sarcaſms* caſt upon them; they only *encountered* with *Pain*: But *Chriſt* had *Pain* and *Shame* alſo; for the *Souldiers*, the *Jews*, the *Thieves*, all *ſcoffed* and *flouted* at him: And therefore, *ſays the Apoſtle*, he not only *endured the Croſs, but he deſpiſed the ſhame*, *Heb.* 12. 2. But this is not all, for the *death* of *Chriſt* was a *curſed death*; *Pain* was *bad*, and *Shame* was worſe, but the *Curſe* is worſt of all; for he that is *hanged on a Tree, is accurſed of God*; and therefore *Chriſt* that he might ſhew the *greatneſs* of his *Love* to his People, *redeemed* them from the *Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for them*, *Gal.* 3. 13. Now though *Chriſt* knew that all theſe *Sufferings* and this *death* ſhould befal him; yet ſo great was his *Love* to *Believers*, that he underwent all *willingly* and *patiently*. What *godly Man* on *Earth*, what *Saint* or *Angel* in *Heaven* can *read* or *hear* thoſe Words of his, in *Luke* 12. 50. without *Aſtoniſhment*, where ſpeaking of his *death* and *ſufferings*, he ſaith, *he had a Baptiſm to be baptized withal, which was* a *Baptiſm* of *Blood*? And *how am I ſtraitned till it be accompliſhed*? Indeed it is ſaid, when the *time* of his *ſufferings* drew near, that he *began to be ſorrowful, that he was ſore amazed and very heavy*: *My Soul*, ſays he, *is exceeding ſorrowful even unto death*. Not that *Chriſt repented* of his Undertaking when he was to *ſuffer*; no, for when the time of his *ſuffering* was come, the *Holy Hiſtory* tells us, he not only went to a *place* that *Judas* who *betrayed him knew of*, that ſo he might be the more *readily* taken; but when his *Enemies* came thither to *apprehend* him, he went forth to *meet* them, and asked them, *Whom ſeek ye*? And when

they told him *Jesus of Nazareth*, he tells them, *I am he*; upon which, they *fell to the ground*; and as if they were more *afraid* to *apprehend* and bring him to his *sufferings*, than he was to *suffer*; he speaks to them again, and by his Words (Oh how willingly, blessed Jesus, didst thou go to suffer!) he doth, as it were, *strengthen* and *encourage* them to go on in their *work* of *laying hold* of him; he *said therefore unto them a second time, Whom seek ye? They said Jesus of Nazareth; Jesus answered them, I have told you that I am he*; if therefore you *seek me*, behold *here I am*. He was a *Volunteer* in his *dying* and *offering* up of himself. His *death* was a *Free-will Offering*, and this made him to become a *Sacrifice*, Psal. 40. 7, 8. *Then, said I, loe I come! In the Volume of thy Book, it is written of me, I delight to do thy Will, O God; yea, thy Law is within my heart.* As if he had said, my *very heart is ready for the shedding of my heart-blood.* Therefore, says he, *I lay down my life, no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my self; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up*, John 10. 17, 18. As if he had said, if it were not *my pleasure* to *part* with it, all that *Men* or *Devils* could do, they were not able to *wrest* it out of *my hands*.

Now though *Christ* by his *death* and *sufferings* accomplished several ends, as the *Satisfaction* of the *Justice* of *God*, the *procuring Pardon* and *Remission* of *Sin*, and the *obtaining Heaven*; yet this also was one *end* of his *death*, and a very *comfortable* one too, and that is the *overcoming* of *death* for *Believers*. *Christ Jesus* the *Lord* of *Life* and *Glory*, hath by his *death* spoiled *Principalities* and *Powers*, and *made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his Cross*: *By his death*, he hath not only *destroyed death*, but him also that had the *power* of *death*, that

that is the *Devil*, and *delivered them, who through fear of death, were all their lives-time ſubject unto* that *bondage*. The Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt* hath *ſlain death's Enmity*; not that *death* is ſo *deſtroyed* that *Believers* ſhall not *die*, but it is *unſtung*: It ſtill *wears* its *Dart*, by which it *ſtrikes* all Men, but it hath *loſt* its *ſting* by which it *hurts*. Is *death* therefore *riding*, upon its *pale Horſe*, and making haſte towards thee, O Believer, fear it not, be not *diſmayed* at it; though there may be *much* of *pain* in it, yet there is *nothing* of the *Curſe* in it; it is as a *Serpent* without a *ſting*, thou mayeſt take it into thy *hand*, yea into thy *boſom*, without *danger*. *Death* poured out all its *Poiſon* upon *Chriſt*, when he was made a *Curſe*; it *faſtned*, yea, it *loſt* its *ſting* in his *bleſſed Side*: And who would *fear* an *Enemy* that is *conquered*? *Death* to a *Believer*, is not only an *innocent*, *harmleſs thing*, but it is *one* of his *beſt Friends*: *death* is *yours*, ſays the Apoſtle, ſpeaking to *Believers*. It is theirs as a *ſpecial Privilege*. When *Chriſt* was upon the *Croſs*, there was a *Contention* between him and *death*; and as it was *propheſied* of him, he was then the *plague* of *death*, and the *deſtruction* of the *Grave*, for he *ſwallowed* them up in *Victory*: So that now *death* drives but a *poor Trade* among *Believers*; all that it can do is but to *deſtroy* the *Body*, and to *affright* ſome that are *weak* in the *Faith*, but it cannot *hurt* them; *Victory* over *death* is as ſure to them as if they had *already overcome*; and therefore, *ſays the Apoſtle*, ſpeaking of *Death* and the *Grave*, *Thanks be to God who hath given us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*.

Secondly, *Meditate upon the Reſurrection of Chriſt*. This is a great *Fundamental Article* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, that upon which the *Faith*,

the *Hope* and *Happiness* of a *Christian* for *Eternity* is *built*; for as *Christ* died for our *Sins*, so he *arose again for our Justification*: And if *Christ* had not risen, the *Faith* and *Hope* of a *Christian* is but *vain*: If *Christ* be not *risen*, a *Christian* shall not *rise*; and if there be no *Resurrection*, there is no *Life everlasting*. If *Christians* have *hope only in this Life, they are of all Men most miserable*. But *blessed* be *God*, *Christ* is *risen*, and therefore the *Faith* and *Hope* of a *Christian* stands *firm*; for it is *built* upon the *Rock* of *Ages*, against which, as the *Gates* of *Death* did not, so the *Gates* of *Hell* shall not prevail. That *Christ* is *risen*, the *Scripture* is *clear*; an *Angel* declares it, *Matth.* 28. 6. He is *not here, he is risen, as he said, Come see the place where the Lord lay*. *Holy Men*, who were *Eye-witnesses* hereof, give their *Testimony* to this *Truth*, when our *Lord* shewed himself *alive* to them by the space of *Forty Days*, in nine several *Apparitions*, and *once* was he *seen* of *five hundred Brethren together*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 6. And, *says* the *Apostle*, Acts 2. 24. *He was raised from the dead, the pains or bands of death being loosed*, because it was not *possible* he should be *holden of them*: It was *possible Death* should *seize* upon him, and so it did, he *willingly* yielding himself up unto it; because as our *Surety*, he owed a *death* by way of *satisfaction* to the *Justice* of *God* for *our sins*, which he had taken upon him, and accordingly he paid it, otherwise *Death* could not have *taken hold* of him. But though *death* did take *hold* of him, yet could it not *keep* it; though it had *possession* of him in the *Grave*, yet it could not *keep* him there; no that was *impossible*; *partly*, because he is *life*, *essentially life*; so himself tells us, *I am the Resurrection and the Life*: Now it is not *possible* for *death* to hold *life* it self *longer* under its *power*, than he who is *life* it

self

lf *pleaſeth.* And then *partly* it was not *poſſible Chriſt* ſhould be *held* under the *power* of *death* in reſpect of us: for having *undertaken* the great work of *reſtoring* us unto *life*, if his *life* had been ſubdued by *death*, if he had been *held* down a *Priſoner* under *the power* of *death* and the *grave*, we had been loſt and undone for ever; for as the *Apoſtle* argues, if *Chriſt* be not *riſen*, then our *Faith is vain, we are yet in our ſins*: But *Chriſt* being to carry on the *work* of our *Redemption* to *perfection*, though he ſubmitted himſelf to *die*, yet was it *impoſſible Death* ſhould have *Dominion* over him for ever; *Chriſt* therefore is *riſen*, and he is *riſen* as a *publick Perſon* in the *behalf* of all *Believers*, who are therefore called the *Children* of the *Reſurrection*, and ſaid to be *riſen* with *him*, *Eph.* 2. 6. *Chriſt's Reſurrection* is not only the *Cauſe* of a *Believer's Reſurrection*, but the *ſecurity* of his *happy Reſurrection*; therefore he is ſaid to be the *firſt fruits of them that ſleep*: Now as the *firſt fruits* did both *aſſure* and *ſanctifie* the whole *Harveſt*; ſo doth *Chriſt* do for *Believers*; by his *Reſurrection* he *aſſures* them of their *Reſurrection*, and *ſanctifies* it alſo, that it ſhall be a *bleſſed Reſurrection*, even unto an *Eternity* of *Happineſs*. And therefore it is with reſpect to *Believers*, that *Chriſt* is called the *Firſt-born*, or the *firſt begotten from the dead*; who are in their *time* and *order* to be *born* from the *dead*, the *Reſurrection* giving *New Birth* or *Being* unto thoſe *bodies*, which while they were in the *Grave* ſeemed to have none. For as *certainly* as the whole *Harveſt follows* the *firſt Fruits*; ſo doth the *general Reſurrection* of *Believers* at the *laſt day* follow the *Reſurrection* of *Chriſt*: For as the *Apoſtle ſaith*, 1 *Cor.* 15. and 12. *If Chriſt be riſen from the dead, how can it be, but that there muſt be a Reſurrection from the dead?* If we acknow-

ledge the *Body* of *Christ* is *risen*, we cannot *rationally* deny the *Resurrection* of our *own bodies*, because *Christ's Resurrection* is not only the *Exemplar* of our *Resurrection*, but the *Cause* of it; for because *Christ* and *Believers* are but one *Mystical Body*, he the *Head*, they the *Members*; and the *Head* being *risen*, the *Members* shall not always *lie* rotting in the *Grave*, but shall in due time *arise* also: *For the Spirit of Life that is in Christ Jesus* the *Head*, will *diffuse* it self into all its *Members*, to *quicken* and *raise* them also in the *morning of the Resurrection.*

And indeed *Christ* is not *perfectly risen* till all *Believers* are *risen* also: For though *Christ's* personal *Resurrection*, was *perfect* when he *arose* out of the *Grave*; and though *all Believers* did then *arise* with *Christ representatively*; yet till all *Believers arise personally* at the *last day*, the *Resurrection* of *Christ* hath not received its *full perfection.* How comfortable therefore is this to a *Believer* to consider, that by the same *Faith* that he puts *Christ's Resurrection* into the *Premises*, he may put his own *Resurrection* into the *Conclusion. If Christ be in you*, says the Apostle, speaking to *Believers*, in *Rom.* 8. 10, 11. *The body is dead*; it is a poor, *frail, dying body, because of sin*: And though you are *really* united unto *Christ* by his *Spirit* dwelling in you, which is a great and glorious *Privilege*; yet your *bodies* must *die*, as well as others; *but the Spirit*, saith he, is *life because of Righteousness*: Though your *bodies die*, your *souls* shall be *swallowed* up in *life* upon your *dissolution*; this Happiness *Believers* have even in *death.* But this is not all; for, *saith the Apostle, if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you*; what then, why though your *bodies* must *fall by Death* into

into the *Grave*; yet they ſhall *riſe* and *live* again at the *Reſurrection*, and that by virtue of the *Spirit* of *Chriſt* which *dwelleth* in you, and is the *Bond* of your *Myſtical Union* with him, who is your *Head*: for, ſays the Apoſtle, *He that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your Mortal Bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* Becauſe *Chriſt* is your *Head*, and his *Spirit dwelleth* in you, you ſhall be *raiſed* again, and that not as others, by a meer *word* of his *Power* as the *wicked* are; but by the *Spirit* of *Life dwelling* in *Chriſt* your *Head*; which is an excellent Priviledge indeed. O the *Conſolation* that the *hope of the Reſurrection* fills the *Believing Soul* withal; it is this *Bleſſed Hope* that ſupports it, not only under the *Troubles* of *Life*, but makes it *Triumph* even under the *Pains* and *Agonies* of *Death* it ſelf.

Thirdly, *Meditate frequently upon the Aſcenſion of Jeſus Chriſt into Heaven.* Now this *Aſcenſion* of *Chriſt* into *Heaven*, as it was full of *Glory* and *Triumph* in reſpect of himſelf: ſo is it full of *admirable Comfort* in reſpect of *Believers.* As to himſelf his *Aſcenſion* was *Triumphant*, a Cloud was prepared as a *Royal Chariot* to carry up this *King* of *Glory* into *Heaven*, ſo it is ſaid in *Acts* 11. 10. *That whilſt his Diſciples beheld he was taken up, and a Cloud received him out of their ſight*; and no doubt, a *Royal Guard* of *Angels* attended the *Solemnity* of their *Lord's Aſcenſion.* If when *Chriſt* came into the *World* to *ſuffer*, *Angels* waited upon him, for even then it was ſaid of him, *Let all the Angels of God Worſhip him*; ſurely much more then now that he hath *finiſhed* the work of Mans *Redemption*, do the *Angels Worſhip him* in his return to *Heaven* again, where he is *exalted* to have a *Name above every Name, that at the Name*

of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, both of things in Heaven, and things on Earth, and things under the Earth, and that every Tongue ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus is Lord to the Glory of God the Father.

But may a poor Believer ſay, what is all this to me, what am I the better that Chriſt is Aſcended and Exalted thus in Glory?

Yes this is much for the *advantage* of *Believers*, for it is the ſame *Jeſus* that was *Crucified* for them, *that God hath made both Lord and Chriſt.* It is he who took not on him the *Nature* of *Angels*, but the *Seed* of *Abraham*, who is *Exalted* above *Angels*; being *gone into Heaven, Angels, Principalities and Powers being made ſubject unto him.* It is this *Jeſus Chriſt*, whom God hath *raiſed from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand in the Heavenly places far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church*, Epheſ. 1. 20, 21. *Chriſt Aſcended* into *Heaven* as a *publick Perſon*, or the *fore-runner* of *Believers*; for he is not gone to take *poſſeſſion* of *Heaven* only for himſelf, but alſo in our *Name* and for us. So the *Apoſtle* tells us, *Heb.* 6. 20. ſpeaking of the *moſt Holy place*, within the *Vail*; whither, *ſays he*, the *fore-runner*, that is, *Chriſt*, is for us *entred.* And if we will not believe the *Apoſtle*, *Chriſt* himſelf tells us the ſame thing, *John* 14. 2. *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go away, I will come again and receive you unto my ſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo.* *Chriſt* is now in *Heaven* tranſacting the *Affairs* and *Concerns* of *Believers*, both for their preſent *Peace* and *Comfort*, and for their future *Eternal Happineſs*;

neſs; not only by *intercepting* the daily cry of their *ſins*, by the continual *Repreſentation* of his *Death* and *Sufferings* unto his *Father*, and ſo making an *Atonement* and *Reconciliation* with *God* for them; but by the *Blood* of his *Croſs*, he maintains this *Peace*, and keeps up good thoughts in *God* towards *Believers*, *ſprinkling* their *poor* and *weak*, but *ſincere Services* with the *Incenſe* of his own *Merits*: ſo that though both they and their *Services* deſerve to be *rejected* for their own ſakes, yet they ſhall *both* be *accepted* for *Chriſt's ſake*. This now is ſomething that *Chriſt* is doing in *Heaven* in the behalf of *Believers*, ſince he is *Aſcended* to his *Father* and to their *Father*, to his *God* and to their *God*. But yet this is not all, for in that comfortable *Prayer* of his to his *Father*, before his *Aſcenſion* into *Heaven*, (which is, ſay ſome, the Copy of his *Interceſſion* now he is in *Heaven*) he doth as it were tell us, that he looks not upon himſelf as *perfectly Happy*, until he hath the *whole number* of *Believers* with him in *Glory*; and therefore, ſays he, *John* 17. 24. *Father I will that thoſe whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold*, that is, *that they may enjoy my Glory which thou haſt given me*. O what *Comfort* then is here to all *Believers* againſt the *Fears* of *Death*, for aſſure thy ſelf O *Believing Soul*, that neither *Death*, nor the *Grave* ſhall be a *bar* to thy *Happineſs*: thou muſt *die* it is true, ſo did *Chriſt*, but he is *Riſen* and *Aſcended* up into *Heaven*, and ſo ſhalt thou alſo in due time, and therefore ſays the Apoſtle, *He hath made us ſit together in Heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus*, Epheſ. 2. 6. Salvation and Happineſs is made ſure to a *Believer* by *Chriſt*, for *if when we were Enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, ſhall we be ſaved by his Life*. For certainly,

tainly, *he is able to ſave unto the utmoſt, all that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever lives to make interceſſion for them. Chriſt* hath not *loſt* his *Love* and *Affection* to his People by his *Advancement*. Harbour not therefore, O *Believing Soul*, any ſuſpicious thoughts in thy *Heart* concerning him, as if by his *Exaltation* into *Heaven*, he were now become *forgetful* of any of his *Members* here below *groaning* under *Sin* or *Miſery*; for though the *days* of his *Paſſion* are ended, yet ſo are not the *days* of his *Compaſſion*. He retains the ſame *Temper* and *Diſpoſition* of *Soul* now he is in *Glory*; his *Heart* is not *changed*, though his *Condition* be; but he ſtill *bears* the ſame *Reſpect* to his *People* now, that he did when he was on *Earth*: for indeed he there *Lives* and *Acts* upon the *account* of *Believers*, ſo ſays the Apoſtle, *He appears in the preſence of God for us*, Heb. 9. 24.

Doth *God*, O *Believing Soul*, by *Diſeaſes* and *Diſtempers* upon thy outward Man, cauſe thy *Beauty* and *Comelineſs* to *conſume and wither*: hath *long* and *tedious Sickneſſes* almoſt *waſted* and *deſtroyed* thy *Body*? and by all art thou brought ſo *low* that thou *deſpaireſt* of *Life*? Doth *Death* ſeem to be *written* upon all thy *helps* to *Life*? And do all the *means* that are uſed for thy *Recovery*, ſeem rather to further thy *Diſſolution*, than any way to hinder it? Why, yet *fear* not *Death*, but *Remember* as *God* hath *Glorified* and highly *Exalted Jeſus Chriſt*, whoſe *Form* and *Viſage* as the *Prophet* ſpeaks, was *marr'd* more than any *Mans*; ſo he will *Exalt* thee alſo, not to an *Equality* of *Glory* with *Chriſt*, for in *Heaven* he ſhall be the *Light* and the *Glory* of it, but yet there ſhall be *ſome likeneſs* and *Conformity* in all the *Members* of *Chriſt*, unto him who is their *Head*. *Fear* not therefore, O *Chriſtian*, the worſt that *Death*, or the *Grave*

can

can do unto thee, for *aſſure* thy ſelf as becauſe he *lives*, *Believers* ſhall *live* alſo, ſo where he *lives* there *Believers* ſhall *live* alſo.

Thirdly, Another Conſideration for the removal of the *fear* of *Death*, is *frequent Meditation of the Happineſs of the Soul in Death. and of the Reſurrection of the Body after Death.* As for the *Happineſs* of the *Souls* of *Believers* in *death*, it is exceeding great, the Body at preſent ſuffers *loſs*, for though once it was an excellent *Fabrick*, the *Workmanſhip* of *God's hands*, yet being forſaken by the *Soul*, it is become *loathſome*, and turns to *Corruption* and *rottenneſs*; ſo ſays the *Wiſe Man*, *The Body returns to the duſt from whence it was taken*; there to *conſume* and *moulder* away; this is the *State* of Man's *Body* in *Death*, procured by *Sin*, and inflicted by *God*: But now for the *Soul* that returns to *God that gave it*, either to partake of *Eternal Bleſſedneſs*, or to *receive Eternal Puniſhments*. Now that the *Happineſs* of *Believers* in their *Souls* is great at *Death*, will appear, if we conſider, either the *Evils* they are *freed* from, or the *Bleſſedneſs* they attain unto; as for the *Evils* that accompany our preſent State in this Life, *Death* frees *Believers* from them all at once; during this *Mortal Life* indeed, *Sufferings* are annexed to the *State* of a *Chriſtian*, as a neceſſary *Appendix* to his very *Being*, for ſuch is our condition while we are here, that *Afflictions* are almoſt become as *needful* for the *Soul*, as *Food* and *Raiment* is for the *Body*, therefore ſaith the *Apoſtle*, if *need be you are in heavineſs through manifold Tribulations*, 1 Pet. 1. 6. God ſees it *needful* that *Afflictions* ſhould be, and in his *Wiſdom* and *Mercy* he proportions the *Afflictions* of his People to their *neceſſities*. This *Life* is a *Life* of *Suffering* unto the People of *God*, it is their appointed

pointed *Path* and *Way* through which they muſt *walk* to *Heaven*; therefore ſays the Apoſtle, *We muſt through many Tribulations enter into the Kingdom of God.* It is *appointed* for us ſo to do. And indeed, as *Job* ſpeaks, *Man is born to trouble as the ſparks flyupward*; he comes into the World *crying*, and all the reſt of his *time* between the *Cradle* and the *Grave* he is not much *Happier*; for his Life is made up of *Sin* and *Suffering*; the *Evil* of *Sin* and the *Evil* of *Suffering*: there is a kind of a continual *Chaining* or *Linking* together of one *Miſery* or *Affliction* to another; a *mixture* of *Pain* and *Sorrow*, or *Succeſſion* of *Evils* and *Troubles*, that runs through all his days; as one *Wave* falls upon the *neck* of another, ſo one *Evil* is no ſooner gone, but another comes in its room. One *depth* as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *calls upon another. Floods* and *Storms* of *Miſeries* and *Afflictions* daily paſs over our heads. And if *Troubles* and *Afflictions* come not of themſelves, nor are cauſed by others, we can *Mint* and *Coin* them our ſelves by our *Sins*. Our *Lord* tells us, *That ſufficient to the day*, that is to *every day are the Evils and Troubles thereof*; but as if they were not enough, we can *create Troubles* to our *ſelves* before hand, and *Anticipate* in our *Fancies* and *Apprehenſions* for our greater *Vexation* and *Trouble*, *Evils* that are to come, though we know not whether we our ſelves ſhall *live* till they come. And herein we are more cruel to our *ſelves*, than the *Devil* is to himſelf, for that *Evil Spirit* cares not to be *Tormented before his time*; whereas we *antidate*, and bring *Evils* that are at a *diſtance* from us *nearer* to us by *unquiet Apprehenſions*, and *ſinful diſtracting Vexations* entertained in our minds; and ſo the *fears* of *Miſeries* to come, make us *far* more *miſerable*, than when thoſe *miſeries* are come upon us, and by the *Apprehenſion* of an *imaginary Evil*,

Evil, we make it become a *real Affliction* and an *unfeigned Torment* to us in our *reſentment* of it. Thus *Sin* and *Sorrow*, *Afflictions* and *Temptations* divide our *days* and *time*, while we are here, until *Death* comes for a *Believers* relief, and then there ſhall be an end put to all his *Sorrows* and *Sufferings*, becauſe there ſhall be an *end* of *Sinning*. After *Death* there ſhall be no *Cries* nor *Tears* under any *Miſeries* or *Afflictions*, no *fears* of future *Evils*, nor no *grief* for *paſt ſins* the cauſes of them, no *Poverty* or *Diſtreſs* ſhall come near that *Holy place*, the *Habitation* of Holy Souls; all the Inhabitants there are become *Kings*, poſſeſſed of *Riches* and *Glory* without *value*. *Fear* not therefore, O *dying Believer*, whoſe *Soul* by *Death* is getting *free* from thy *Body*; for thou art but removing from *Earth* to *Heaven*, where thou ſhalt *inſtantly* be with thy *dear Lord* and *Saviour*; thou art but going to thy *God* and *Father*, and the *Father* of *Spirits*, to viſit thoſe *Manſions* of *Glory* that are there *prepared* for thee: *Chearfully therefore, take thy leave of thy Body, and let it know that thou art taking thy flight to Heaven, during the time that it ſhall ſleep in the duſt of the Grave until the morning of the Reſurrection, where thou ſhalt be out of the reach of all Afflictions, and Sorrows, and where thou canſt not be endangered by ſin, the Tempter, or any of his Temptations.*

And concerning the Reſurrection of the Body, it is not only one of the moſt *Excellent Myſteries* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, but it is alſo one of its *Glorious Advantages*. It is that which the *Heathens* with all their *deep Reaſonings*, could never attain to the *underſtanding* of; but though *Humane Reaſon* be *blind* and cannot find out this *Glorious Myſtery*, yet we who are *Chriſtians*, have the *ſure* and *certain Knowledge* of it diſcovered to us by *Divine Revelation*;

Revelation; and when *Reason* is once *savingly enlightned* from above, O how the *Justice* and *necessity* of the *future Resurrection* of the *Body*, is not only *acknowledged*, but *admired*. I *confess* when a *Believer* is cast upon his *Death-bed*, and his *Soul* ready to take its *leave* of the *Body* in its *passage* unto *Heaven*, it is no *small cause* of *Joy* and *rejoycing*, to consider that as soon as it hath cast off its *Earthly Tabernacle*, it shall be immediately admitted into the *Glorious Presence of God himself*, where it shall *view* and *contemplate* his *Face* with *infinite* and *unspeakable delight* and *satisfaction*. But yet that *Holy Joy* and that *Heavenly Sweetness*, which sometimes is so *Powerful* that it *Ravisheth* the *Soul* of a *Believer* on a *Death-bed*, whilst it *Contemplates* that Happiness to which it is going; may be *disturbed* and *imbittered* by the *Consideration* of the *poor Bodies* being cast into the *Earth*, there to become a *Feast* for *Worms* to feed upon. But be not *troubled* at this, O *Believing Soul*; for this *seeming Destruction* of thy *Body* shall not be *Eternal*, though it *fall* into the *Grave* by *Death*, where it *seems* at present to be *lost* and *forgotten*, yet shall it have a certain *Resurrection*, and then the *Ignominy* and *Disgrace* under which it lay in the *Grave* shall *appear*, not to have been so *great*, as its *Resurrection* out of it shall *appear Glorious*: for *it is sown in Corruption, but it is raised in Incorruption*; *it is Sown in dishonour, but it is raised in Glory*; *it is Sown in weakness, it is raised in Power*; *it is Sown a Natural Body, it is raised a Spiritual Body*, in 1 *Cor.* 15. 42, 43. Fear not therefore O *Believing Soul*, but commit thy *Body* with Confidence unto the *Earth*, and let thy *Heart* rejoyce, let thy *Tongue* be glad, and let thy *Flesh rest in the hopes of a blessed Resurrection*; for *assure* thy self thy *Body* shall not always lie *rotting* in the *Grave*, neither shall it there

see

ſee Corruption for ever; but there ſhall come a *time* when *God* ſhall ſhew it the *path* of *Life* again; when *thy Soul* ſhall *deſcend* from *Heaven* to *aſſume* its new raiſed *body* out of the *Grave*, to become a moſt *glorious Body*, even like unto the *glorious Body* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, being made more *ſpiritual*, and ſo more *ſuitable* to the *Nature* and *Operations* of the *Soul*, that it may become a *fit Partner* with it, in the *Bleſſedneſs* and *Happineſs* of *Heaven* for evermore.

Fourthly, *Conſider the Familiarity that Believers have expreſſed towards Death.* Ordinarily indeed Men put *death* into ſuch ugly ſhapes, and repreſent it to themſelves under ſuch terrible and affrighting forms, that they paſs their *lives* under *ſlavery* and *bondage* through the *fears* of it all their days. The viſage of *Death* appears ſo grim and full of horrour to the minds of ſome, that the ſerious forethoughts of it, ſeem to them to be a *tormenting them before their time.* O how vaſtly different are the thoughts of a *wicked* and a *godly man* concerning *Death* and the *Grave*! the one looks upon *death* as full of *Dread and Horrour*, the other looks upon it as a *Meſſenger* of *Peace* and *Joy*; and how can it be otherwiſe? For to the *wicked* it comes as a *dreadful Enemy*, armed with the *wrath* of an *angry God*, which *burns* to the loweſt *Hell*: But to the *Godly*, it comes as a *peaceable*, *loving Friend*, ſent with *Tydings of Peace* and *Reconciliation*, *from* him who is the *God of Peace* and *Love.* Natural fear of *Death* in a wicked Man is *great*; but when natural fear is encreaſed by *guilt* lying upon the *Conſcience*, and *ſtaring* a *Sinner* in the *face*; Oh what *diſmal Horrour* and *Confuſion* muſt *ſeize* upon ſuch a *Soul* under the Apprehenſions of *Death*? Well may ſuch a one look upon the *Grave* as a *Dungeon*, and *Death*

as

as *Hell* it ſelf, an *awakened Conſcience* repreſenting to his view nothing but the *Fiends* and *Furies* of that *Infernal Pit*, that wait to be the *Executioners* of the *Wrath* and *Vengeance* of the *great God* upon him, in the Woes and Miſeries of *everlaſting Burnings*. Who wonders therefore to hear ſuch an one crying out upon a *Death-bed* with *Horrour* and *Anguiſh* of *Soul*, Oh I am ſo *ſick* I cannot *live*, and yet I am ſo *ſinful* I *dare* not *die*, and yet *die* I muſt! Oh would to *God*, that the *ſerious Thoughts* of theſe things might be laid to *heart* by all *profane Sinners*? What a happy means might it *poſſibly* be, to prevent the *Horrours* and *Conſternation* of *Soul* in many upon a *Death-bed*? But if Sinners cannot bear the *Thoughts* of *theſe things* in their Minds *now*, for *fear* of *Diſtraction*; how will they bear *the ſight* and preſence of them then? If the *thinking* and *ſpeaking* of them now be *dreadful*, the *feeling* of them will be *far more tormenting*.

But now a *godly Man thinks* and *ſpeaks* of *death* after another manner; for if he thinks and ſpeaks of *death* as a *godly Man* may and ought to do; he is ſo far from being *terrified* with the *thoughts* of it, that he *thinks* of it *comfortably*, *ſpeaks* of it *familiarly*. As it was wont to be the *ſpeech* of a very *Holy Perſon*, now with *God*, who was pretty well ſtricken in years, *I hope it will not be long before I ſhall be in Heaven*; for few live above *ſixty* or *ſeventy years*, *and I am now a good many above fifty*; *certainly therefore it cannot be long before I ſhall die*: Thus this *Holy Soul*, being deſirous of *death*, did uſe *delightfully* to reckon how *little time* there was to *paſs* between it and *Heaven*, and with a holy *longing* of *Soul* reaching after *death*, as one that was *troubled* that it was ſo *long* a *coming*. Thus certainly did *holy Job* look upon *death*, not as an *Enemy*, nor yet barely as a *Stranger*; but as one of his *Friends*, whom he was *well acquainted* with, took

took a kind of *Delight* and *Contentment* in it: See with what an unuſual, but yet *ſweet* and *familiar* manner, he *ſalutes* and *welcomes death*, and all its *Retinue*, in *Job* 17. 14. *I have ſaid to Corruption, thou art my Father; and to the Worm, thou art my Mother and Siſter.* The *Holy Man* makes no more of *Death* and the *Grave*, than as if he were going to be *embraced* by a *compaſſionate Father*, or a *tender-hearted Mother*, or *Siſter*, whoſe *Bowels* were full of *love* and *pity* to him. Thus St. *Paul* alſo ſpeaks of *Death*, as that which he was *daily familiar* with, being in *Deaths often*, frequently thinking thereof; for ſaid he, *I die daily*; *Thoughts* of *Death* was that which he *accuſtomed* himſelf unto, and that was one Cauſe why he was ſo *willing* to *embrace* it. And thus it ſhould be with all of us, were our hearts rightly *affected*, and we ſo *familiarly acquainted* with *death* as we ought: Thoſe of us who have the moſt *lively Faith*, would not only, not be *afraid* of *death*, but we ſhould even *court* it, as that which is *better* than *life*.

But I would not here *diſcourage* any *weak Believer*; for I dare not *ſay*, that they are no *true Believers*, who are not come up to this *frame* of *Soul*. Though it is true *Grace* is the ſame in *all Believers*, one *Believer* hath the ſame that *another Believer* hath; yet all that are *Believers* do not attain to the ſame *degrees* of *Grace*. There are ſome, and it is their *ſin*, and ought to be their *Humiliation*, that *Death* and they are *little acquainted*, they *ſeldom* deſcend into the *Grave* by frequent *Meditations* of their *Mortality*, they look not into the *Pit* out of which at firſt they were *taken*, and *into* which they are ſhortly to *return*; now their *comfort*, in the thoughts of *death* is *little*, if any at all, becauſe *death* and they are ſuch *Strangers* to one another: Theſe may be *true Believers*, but they are *weak*

and

and *faulty*. But now others there are, who are ſo *advanced* in *Grace* above their *Brethren*, that by a *conſtant Familiarity* with *death*, are ſo *compoſed* in their *Spirits*, that they *fear* it not, nay they *rejoice* in the *thoughts* of it; not becauſe they think they ſhall not *taſte* of *death*, for they know that *death* will overtake them as well as others; they are *ſenſible* that the *time* of their *departure* draws *nearer* and *nearer* daily: Theſe things they *believe*, but they do not *afflict* themſelves therewith, ſo well are they *acquainted* with *death*, both in the *Nature* and in the *Effects* of it. And were they to *die preſently*, this would not much *trouble* them; for they *know* the *bitterneſs* of *death* is paſt, though *death* it ſelf be not; the *Gall* and the *Wormwood* is *taken* out, *Chriſt* hath been *there* before them; and therefore the *ſting* of *death* which is *ſin* is *gone*, the *dangers*, yea and the *difficulties* alſo in *dying* are *removed* out of the *way*: This they *believe*, and therefore they are not *afraid*, though by *death* they *deſcend* through the *Grave* into *Heaven*; for their *Jeſus*, their *Saviour* is there; and they *know* that till they *die*, where he *is* they *cannot* be; wherefore *they ſay*, *though* we *die*, nay therefore *will* we *die*, that we *may ſee him*.

Wouldſt thou therefore, O *weak Believer*, attain unto this ſweet *frame* of Spirit, accuſtom thy ſelf then to a *holy familiarity* with *death*, conceive of it under the faireſt and eaſieſt *Notions*; this is that the *Spirit* of *God* in Scripture *delights* in; when it ſpeaks of *death* with reſpect to the *People* of *God*, it always makes uſe of the moſt *comfortable Expreſſions* to repreſent it to them by. So ſweetly is *death enamell'd*, and ſo *richly* is it *cloathed* in the *holy Language*, that it ſeems to have a *kind* of *Luſtre* and *Beauty* upon it, to draw the Hearts and Affections of *Believers* to be deſirous of it. Look a little therefore,

fore, *O Believer*, into the *Sacred Oracles*, and ſee how the *Spirit of God* teacheth us to *cloath Death* with delightful *Expreſſions*; ſometimes it is *called* an *undreſſing* or *uncloathing*: And what Man that hath worn a *Suit* of *Cloaths* till it is become *filthy* and *naſty*, would not be glad to put off his old *filthy Garments*, that he might put on *Change* of *Raiment*? And why ſhould not a *Chriſtian* be willing to lay down the *Earthly Houſe* of his *Tabernacle*, though it be in the *Duſt* of the *Grave*, that he may be *cloathed upon* with his *Houſe* which is from *Heaven*? Sometimes *Death* is compared to *Reſt*; they ſhall *reſt* in their *Beds*, ſays the *Prophet*: and *Job* ſpeaking of the *ſtate* of Man in *death*, tells us, *there the weary are at reſt*. Now when a Man hath *wrought hard*, and taken great *pains* and *labour* all the *Day*, how deſirous is he to go to *Bed* and take his *Reſt*? And is not *Death* the ſame to thee, *O Chriſtian*? Doth not the *Spirit* of *God* call it ſo! *Bleſſed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they reſt from their labours*. And ſurely there is no *reſt* like to that *reſt* that a *Chriſtian* obtains after his *ſpiritual labours* and *conflicts* with *Sin*, *Satan*, the *World*, and his own *evil Heart*; when the *Soul* is ſet free from the *Body*, and takes its *flight* at once from all theſe into the Boſom of God, that place of *Reſt* and *Happineſs* which *remains* for the *People* of *God*. As there is no *Yoke* like unto the *Yoke* of *Chriſt*, when a *Chriſtian* ſuffers for him, for it is a *Yoke* lined with *Love*; *My Yoke*, ſays he, *is eaſie, and my Burthen is light*. So there is no *Reſt* and *Happineſs* like that which is with *Chriſt*; for the ſame *Happineſs* that he *enjoys*, his *Children* and *Servants* enjoy alſo. Sometimes *death* is called a *Sleep*; ſo ſays our *Lord*, *our Friend Lazarus ſleepeth*, it is ſpoken of *his death*; now who of us, when the day is *ſpent*, and the night hath overtaken us, is *afraid* to go to *bed and ſleep*?

And

And why then should a *Christian*, when his *Days* are *finished*, and the *Night* of *Sickness* is come upon him, be *afraid* to fall *asleep*, though he *sleep* the *sleep* of *Death*? By such *Considerations* as these, and the like, that the *Scripture* holds forth to us, *Christians* should endeavour to *allay* the *bitterness*, *beautifie* the *deformity*, *blunt* the *edge*, and take *out* the *sting* of *death*; that all hard thoughts of it might be *buried*, and instead thereof there might *grow* up a *sweet Familiarity* and *Acquaintance* between them and *death*; *Oh* how would this *facilitate* the work of *dying*, and cause *holy Souls* to exult with *joy* and *rejoicing* when *death* is approaching towards them.

And here I cannot but make a little *Digression* to *reason the Case* with some *weak Believers*, whose *unwillingness* to *die* is very great, because their *fears* of *death* are so many. *But why should the fears of Death so amaze and terrifie thee, O weak Believer? Hast thou not the same Grace in thee with others? Hast thou not the same Faith, the same Hope, the same Love, acting and working in thee? Dost thou not serve the same Lord? Hast thou not the same God for thy Father, the same Jesus for thy Saviour, the same Spirit of Consolation for thy Comforter? Art thou not going to the same Heaven? nay art thou not going to the same Heaven, in the same way, that all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Saints of God in all Ages have gone before thee? Death was the Gate through which they all entred into Heaven; and why then shouldst thou be so unwilling to go to Heaven in the same way? Oh how unlike to Christians do they shew themselves, who are so loath to die, that they will not come, but must be dragg'd to the Grave, yea to the very thoughts of Death? Oh how unsuitable is this Temper to those who desire that God's Wills may be done, who pre-*

profeſs themſelves to be Strangers and Pilgrims here upon Earth, and to look upon Heaven as their Country and their Fathers Houſe? The life of a Chriſtian ſhould be a life of Faith; now the Excellency of the Life of Faith in a Believer with relation unto Death, lies in this, that it makes him not only ſubmiſſive, but chearfully to come to that to which another muſt be dragged by force, I mean Death and the Grave. To a *Believer*, when his *Faith* is on the *wing*, *Life* (as St. *Paul* ſays of his) is not *dear*, and *Death*, (as he ſpeaks of his) is *deſired*. It was as *hard* to make St. *Paul* patient, when he thought of *living*, as to make another *patient*, when he thinks of *dying*; a moſt *ſweet* and *Bleſſed Frame* of *Spirit*, but where is it to be *found* now? how *rarely* is it be to ſeen? the moſt of Men, ſhall I ſay, nay, the moſt of *Profeſſors*; and would to *God* there were not juſt *cauſe* to complain and ſay, whom we *hope* are *real Chriſtians*, their *Hearts* and *Affections* are ſo much ſet upon the *World*, even as if their *Portion* were not in *Heaven*, but they themſelves were among the *Number* of thoſe whoſe *Names* are *written* in the *Earth*. The *Lord* humble us, that ſo much of this *Evil frame* of *Spirit* is to be ſeen in the beſt of *God's Children*; as appears by their *backwardneſs* and *unwillingneſs* to *die*. *O Chriſtians, if Jeſus Chriſt had gone as unwillingly to Suffer and to Die for us; as we go to Pray to him, and to hear from him, not to ſay as unwillingly as we go to die, that we may enjoy him, what had become of our Salvation?* but bleſſed be *God* he did not. And ſurely *Chriſtians, if it was Chriſts deſire to die for us as it was, it ſhould then be our longing to live with him, though it be by Dying. Oh what a ſtrange unſeemly and unbecoming thing is it, for a Chriſtian to hear his Saviour crying out, I have a Baptiſm to*

be baptized withal, though it was the Baptism of his bloody Death and Sufferings, and oh, how am I straitned till it be accomplished? And that a Christian, reflecting upon the thoughts of his own Death, should say, I have a Baptism to be baptized withal, though not a Baptism of a bloody Death, by the hands of Violence; but the Baptism of an easie, quiet, and peaceable Death; and how am I straitned and full of fears lest it should be accomplished? Certainly Christians, a willingness in Christ to die for us, that we might live by him, should cause in us a willingness to die that we might live with him.

Would to *God*, O *Christian Reader*, that what hath been said, might be a means to work in my self and thee, not only a *readiness* and *fitness* for *Death*, though that is very good, and that in which the *safety* of a *Christian* lies; and happy are they that have gone so far, for *Heaven* is sure to them whether they *know* it or not: but *Oh* that we might go further, that *Grace* might attain to a *greater Perfection* in us, even that we might come to a *Holy willingness* and *desire*, yea to a *Holy longing* of *Soul* after *Death*. This is that *Holy covetousness* of *Soul* that *God allows* of. There are *two things* wherein a *Christian* cannot be too *insatiable* in his *desires* after them, *one* is, that he may *Honour God*, the *other* is, that he may *enjoy God*; that he may *honour God* as much as he can while he is on *Earth*, and that he may *enjoy God* as soon as it may be in *Heaven*; this is the most *commendable* and *desirable life*, and this will *end* in the most *Happy* and *Comfortable Death*. Death did I say, nay it is *Life* in *Death*; it is *Death* swallowed up of *Life*, even in a *Life* of *unconceivable Glory* and *Happiness*, in the enjoyment of that *God* who is all *Life*, all *Love*, all *Peace*, all *Joy*, and all *Happiness*, in the utmost and highest *Perfection*.

I

I am ſenſible I have made a *Digreſſion* in this particular, but the *deſire* I had, *Chriſtian Reader*, to ſtir up my *own Soul* and thine alſo, unto a *Duty* ſo full of *Sweetneſs* and *Delight*, hath put me upon it. I now go on to what yet remains.

Having laid down ſome *Conſolations* againſt the *fear* of *Death* in general; I ſhall in the next place endeavour to propound ſome *Conſiderations* for the ſupport of *Chriſtians* under the loſs of *Friends* and *Relations* in particular, which unto many is a *ſore Trial*, and hard to be *born*: for it is as common for *Chriſtians* to *exceed* in their *Grief* for their *dead Friends* and *Relations*, as it is to *exceed* in their *Love* and *Delight* in their *living Friends* and *Relations*; and in both it is very *hard* for *Chriſtians* to *keep* their *Paſſions* and *Affections* within due bounds. The bleſſed *Apoſtle* therefore gives us *Excellent Counſel* how we ſhould carry our ſelves under the enjoyment of *Relations* and outward *Comforts* whilſt we have them; and how we ſhould *bear* up under the *loſs* of them, when *God* takes them away from us; we have the *Direction* for both, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29. If we have *Relations* or *Worldly Enjoyments*, why then, ſaith he, *Rejoyce in them as if you rejoyced not*. If you want them, or have loſt them, then, ſays he, *weep for them as if you wept not*: and he lays down a very cogent reaſon for what he ſays; for the *time* is *ſhort* and the *World* is *paſſing away*, and ſo are you and all your *Relations* and *Comforts* paſſing away with it. As if the *Apoſtle* had ſaid, if *God* hath *Bleſſed* you with *dear* and *ſweet Relations*, with *pleaſant* and *delightful Comforts*; yet conſider it is but a little time that you ſhall *enjoy* them; they and you ſhall quickly *part* again, therefore *rejoyce* in them as if you *rejoyced* not. And if *God* hath ſeen good to take away thoſe ſweet *Pledges* of his *Love*, and once the *Objects* of your

Delight and *Joy*, do not *much Afflict* your ſelves under the *loſs* of them; for it is but a *little while* that you ſhall *continue* here without them, the *time* is *ſhort*, and the *World* is *paſſing* away, and ere long it will not be; yea, you your ſelves are paſſing away with it, yea *before* it alſo; *weep* therefore as if you wept not: theſe things are not your *great Concerns*, your *Happineſs* lies not in the *Enjoyment* of them, nor your *Miſery* in the *loſs* of them; but it lies in ſomething *higher*, and of greater *Worth* and *Excellency*, even in *God himſelf*; it's the Enjoyment of him only that can make a *Soul happy*, and the *loſs* of him only that can make it *miſerable*. Therefore with a *Holy Moderation* and *Indifference* of *Affection*, carry your ſelves continually in every condition.

Now before I proceed to lay down *particular Conſolatory Directions* for the ſupport of *Chriſtians* under the *loſs* of *Friends* and *Relations*, I muſt here put in a *double caution* which *Chriſtians* muſt carefully obſerve. The one is, that they *deſpiſe* not the *Chaſtening* of the *Lord*; the other is, that they *faint* not under them: theſe are two *extreams*, the *Apoſtle* exhorts *Chriſtians* to be aware of, and they are both comprehended in *Hebrews* 12. 5. *My Son deſpiſe not thou the Chaſtening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art Rebuked of him.* When *God* lays his *Correcting hand* upon us, for any to be ſo *bold* as to ſay, they do not *regard* it, let *God* take all if he will; muſt my *Eſtate* go? I care not if it doth; will *God* take away my *Children* or *Relations*, let them *die*; thus to make light of the *hand* of *God*, is to deſpiſe the *Chaſtening* of the *Lord*, and *God* will not long *bear* it, nor with us for it. But then there is another *Extream* that we muſt take heed of under *Affliction*, and that is *fainting*; If when Goods are taken away, the *Hearts* of thoſe that

that enjoy them are taken away alſo, and they *ſink* into *deſpondency* and *diſtruſt*. If when *Children die* the *Spirits* of *Parents die* too, this is *fainting* under the *Rod*. A *Chriſtian* now muſt walk in the middle way between both theſe *Extreams*, neither carelesly to *deſpiſe*, nor *deſpairingly* to *faint* under the *Chaſtiſements* of the *Lord*.

But though *Chriſtians* muſt neither *deſpiſe* the hand of *God* when it is lifted up againſt them, nor yet *faint* under it, yet they ought to be *ſenſible* of it; for it is a moſt *unbecoming temper* in any *Chriſtian* not to tremble when *God* ſmites him. *Weep* and *Mourn* we may under *Affliction*; God *allows Tears* to flow from our *Eyes*, and *Sorrow* in our *Hearts* under the *loſs* of *Friends* and *Relations*. *Grief* in ſuch caſes *doubtleſs* is very *Lawful*. To be without *Natural Affections* is a *Heathenish ſin*. *Rom.* 1. 29. It is our *Duty* to take notice of every *twig* of *God's Rod*. Not to be troubled when the *hand* of *God* hath made a *breach* upon us is our *ſin*. To be above *Paſſions* is the *Happineſs* of *Heaven*, and to *rectifie Paſſions*, is much of our *Happineſs* on *Earth*. To be without *Natural Affections*, is to be *below* a Man, but to *Order* and *Manage* them *aright*, is the *Perfection* of a *Chriſtian*.

Having premiſed this, I now proceed to lay down ſome *Conſolatory Directions* for the ſupport of *Chriſtians*, under the *loſs* of *Friends* and *Relations*, which may be very uſeful alſo in the undergoing any other Affliction whatſoever; and I ſhall reduce them all unto theſe particular heads, as ſome *Conſiderations* relating unto *God* the *Author* of our *Afflictions*. Some relating to our *ſelves* that are the *Subjects* of *Afflictions*. And ſome relating to the *Afflictions* themſelves. Firſt, ſome *Conſiderations* relating unto *God* the *Author* of our *Afflictions*. And here conſider,

First, *God hath more right to and in all our Friends, and Relations than we our selves have.* He is *Lord* of all, so great is his *Dominion* and *Sovereignty* over all, that what he can *do* by *Might*, he may do by *Right*. He is not *accountable* unto any, as we are, nor is he *tied* by any *Rule* or *Law*, but his own *Will* in any of his *Actings*: And therefore if *God* take away any of our *Friends* and *Relations*, it is no more than what he *may do*; and if God do *no more* than whan he *may do*, who are we that we should *Complain*? When *God* gives us *Relations* or *Comforts* for our *use* and *benefit*, he still keeps the *right* to them in his own *hands*, and when he lets us have the *Possession* of them for a time, he *keeps* the *Propriety* to himself. If *God gives* us *Comforts* it is an *Act* of *Bounty*, but when he *takes* them *away* it is an *Act* of *Justice*; for he is a *Sovereign Lord* in *both*. *God* cannot *injure* his *Creatures*; his *Sovereignty* and *Supremacy* is enough to *bear* him out, *whatever* he doth with or to them. Hast thou lost a *dear Husband*, a *loving Wife*, or a *dutiful Child*? Let that *Right God* hath in them, and the *Sovereignty* he hath over thee and them, *quiet* thy *Spirit* under all. It was so with *David*, *Psal.* 39. 2. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou, Lord didst it.*

Secondly, *Consider whatever dear Relations God hath taken from thee, he is able to make thee a Recompence with great advantage, and that in the same kind, if he see it good for thee.* Say not therefore concerning thy *dead Friends* and *Relations*; what shall *I do* for those sweet *Refreshments*, and those *Comfortable Delights*, that once I *enjoyed* in them, but *Death* hath now *spoiled* me of all; for *God* is able to give thee *much more*, than what was in all *these*. *God* is not as *Isaac* that had but *one Blessing*.

Bleſſing. Our *Heavenly Father* hath all *Bleſſings* at his *Command*: what a ſweet *Title* is that which the *Apoſtle* gives unto *God* for the *Comfort* of all *Believers*, 2 Cor. 1. 3. *The Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort and Conſolation.* Friends, Relations with all the Comforts and Delights belonging to them, are at his *Command*, and he can *ſpeak* them into *being* for your *Support* and *Comfort* when he *pleaſeth*. If *God* take away a *Mercy* from any of his *People*, uſually he gives them *another* in the *room* of it, and many times a *better*. *God* ſmote *David*'s *Child* begotten in *Adultry*, and *David Faſts* and *Prays* for the *life* of it, and notwithſtanding this, the *Child died*: but in a little time *God* gave him another, a *Solomon*, a *Jedidiah* one that was *beloved* of the *Lord*, in his *ſtead*. *God* beſtows many *comfortable Enjoyments* upon his People in their *paſſage* through this *World*, to ſome he gives *dear Relations*, to others he gives *Eſtates*, to ſome abundance of *Health*, to others *faithful* and *loving Friends*: now theſe *Comforts*, are to *continue* but for a *while*; and thoſe of them that *laſt longeſt*, will conſume away at length: and when theſe *Comforts* are taken away, it ſeems to be a *time* of *darkneſs* and *ſadneſs* with the *People* of *God*; but if their *Faith* be *active* and *vigorous*, they may *ſupport* themſelves with this, that *God* doth not uſe to be long *wanting* to the *Comfort* of his *People* that *wait* for him: *David* tells us as much, *Pſal.* 18. 8. *Thou Lord wilt light my Candle, the Lord my God ſhall enlighten my darkneſs*

Thirdly, Conſider this, *doth God deny thee, or hath he taken from thee ſome Comforts which thou counteſt as great as any thou canſt enjoy as to outward Bleſſings, yet hath he left thee many ſtill, and he hath far better to beſtow upon thee, even ſuch*

between which and them there is no comparison. It may be thou wanteſt *Poſterity* to bear up thy *Name*, when thou art *dead* and gone, and thou crieſt out with *Abraham*, *Lord what wilt thou give me ſeeing I go Childleſs.* Is this thy *Caſe*, *O Chriſtian?* why then conſider, as you have not the *Comfort* of *enjoying* of *Children*, ſo you have not the *Care* and *Trouble* of *Educating* and *bringing* them *up*, nor the *Grief* and *Vexation* of their *wicked lives*, and ſometimes *more wicked* and *untimely deaths*; which is a conſtant *trouble* of *Soul* unto many; which made a *Holy Man* once *mournfully complain* and ſay, *It is better to weep for ten dead Children, than for one living Child.* Little do you know what a *continual grief* of *Spirit* and a *conſtant aking* of *heart*, ſome *Children* are unto their *Parents*. What a *heart wounding* was it to *David*, when he cries 2 *Samuel* 16. 11. *Behold my Son which came out of my Bowels, ſeeketh my life.* Oh how many *Children* are there to whom the lives of their *Parents* are a burthen? who inſtead of *Praying* to *God* their *Heavenly Father* for their *Parents*, not only *think* and *wiſh* it in their *Hearts*, but among their *Prophane Companions* are not *aſhamed* to *ſpeak* it with their *Tongues*, as I have heard of ſome, *wickedly* and *impiouſly* deſiring that they could *invert* that *Petition* of the *Lord's Prayer*, and ſay of their *Earthly Fathers* what others ſay of their *Heavenly Father*, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, longing for the *Expiration* of the *life* of thoſe who under *God* were the *Inſtruments* of conveying life unto them. Oh to what a *heighth* of *Impiety* are ſuch *vile wretched Monſters* come, for they deſerve not the *Name* of *Children*, who cannot be *content* to *ſtay* till *God* takes away their *Parents* from them, but would themſelves *bury* them as it were *alive*. And let not any ſuch think *ſlightly* to *paſs* over

their

their Sin, by saying, Why, we *wish* them no *ill*, what *hurt* is it to *wish* them in *Heaven*, they cannot be in a *better place*? It is true they cannot; but this doth not excuse their *wickedness*, for doubtless it is not so much their *Parents Happiness* in *Heaven* that they *desire*, as that they might *enjoy* their *Estates* here upon *Earth*. But let all such *wicked Wretches* know, that *God* will be sure to meet with them *here* or *hereafter*: And if the *Blessing* of *long Life* be promised unto those that *honour* their *Parents*, those then that *desire* the *Death* of their *Parents*, shall have cause to fear their *lives* may be *shortned*; for surely of such *wicked*, (I had almost said) *blood-thirsty Wretches*, it may be *truly said*, that they shall not *live* out *half* their *days*. But this by the way.

But this is not my *Case*, may some say, *God* hath not *denied* me *Children* or *Relations*, but he hath *taken* many of them *from me*, and such who were *very delightful* to *me*, and this doth much *trouble* me. But though *God* hath taken *some* from you, yet hath he not left you *more* than he hath *taken*? so it is sometimes: But yet it *frequently happens*, that if *God* removes away *one mercy* from us, presently we are *so cast down*, as if all our *Enjoyments* were *gone*; and we mourn so *excessively* that we are become so *blind*, that we cannot behold the *Mercies God* hath *left* us, for the *want* of what he hath *taken* from *us*. But why, *O Christian*, art thou so *unthankful* to *God*, and so *unkind* to thy *self*, as to *lose* the *Comfort* of all the *other Mercies* thou enjoyest, because *God* hath taken away *one Mercy* that thou *wantest*. Oh vile *Ingratitude*, how many thousands are there, as *good* shall I *say*, nay *better* than you, whose *whole Harvest* of *Comforts* in this *World*, is not a *handful* to the *gleaning* of those *Comforts* you still enjoy; who in all their *Lives*

never were *Owners* of ſuch *comfortable Enjoyments* as you now *over-look* in your *grief* and *trouble*, if not in your *diſcontent*. But what doſt thou mean, *O Chriſtian*, by all this? What are the *Mercies God* hath *left* thee in *poſſeſſion*, nothing worth? The *Grave* hath *ſwallowed* up a *Child*, *Death* hath ſnatch'd away *a Friend*; but ſtill thou haſt a *Husband*, it may be, or a *Wife*, or *Children*; or if *God* hath *ſtripp'd* thee of all theſe, yet he hath left thee a *comfortable Eſtate* to live upon, with *health* and *ſtrength* to *uſe* and *enjoy* it; or if this be gone alſo, have you not the *Goſpel*, the *Ordinances* of *God*; and if thou art a *Believer*, thou haſt an *Intereſt* in *Chriſt*, and in the *Covenant* of *Grace*, and a *Right* and *Title* to all the *Priviledges* belonging to that *Covenant*, as *Pardon* of *Sin*, *Peace* of *Conſcience*, and *Hopes* of *eternal Life*? And what doſt thou *faint* and *ſink*, as if all thy *Comforts* in this *World*, and all thy *Hopes* of the *World* to come were *dead* and *buried* in one *Grave* together? Beware of this, O ye *mourning*, *afflicted ones*; for the *Sin* is great, and ſo is the *Danger* that *attends* it, as might be ſhew'd at large; but I forbear. Yet before I leave this Head, I ſhall add one thing more. You who have *loſt* the *delight* of your *Eyes*, and the *joy* of your *hearts*, as to *outward Comforts*; yet *remember God* hath *far better* to *beſtow* upon you, even ſuch as *tranſcend* the *love* of *Parents*, or the *joy* of *Children*; I confeſs a *dear Husband*, a *loving Wife*, a *beloved Child*, an *affectionate Friend*, theſe are very *great things* when they ſtand by other *Comforts* and *Enjoyments*; but, Oh! what *poor*, *little*, *ſmall* things; nay *nothings* are they, when *God* ſhall ſet *himſelf* by *them*, before a *gracious Soul*? And now that *God* is taking away theſe *earthly Comforts*, who can tell, but that hereby he is making *way* for *himſelf* the *King* of *Glory* to come

into

into ſuch a *Soul*, to *communicate* of *himſelf* and his *Grace*, in a more *ſweet* and *ſenſible* way and manner than ever he hath done. And, as *one ſaith*, the *Death* of *Children*, *Relations*, and *Friends*, theſe *dark* and *uncomfortable Providences* muſt *caſt* up and *prepare* the *way* of the *Lord*, removing them out of the *heart*, that *himſelf* may dwell there alone.

Fourthly, Under your Tears and Sorrows in the loſs of Friends and Relations, conſider, *What wrong hath God done you by your Afflictions, that you ſo mourn and complain?* God hath taken from you a *dear Relation*, from whom you *expected* much *Comfort*; but *God* had a *greater Intereſt* in your *Relation*, than you had, for all *Souls are his*; and will you *diſpute* with him? Who had moſt *Right* to diſpoſe of your *Relations*, *God* or *you*? Your *Relation*, though never ſo *dear* to you, was the *work* of his *hands*; and what, may not *God* do what he will with his *own*? Suppoſe the *Relation* thou haſt loſt, was a *beloved Child*, that you *nouriſhed* and *bred* up, and that with *great pains* and *care*, *God* hath *paid* you *ſufficiently* for it, in the *Loan* of your *Child* ſo long; and now that your *Child* is come to *full Age*, and to the *Time appointed of the Father*, may he not take it *home* unto himſelf? Did you, or could you *provide* better for your *Child* than *God* can? *God* gave your *Child Life* and *Breath* while it was with you, that it might be a *Comfort* to you, and you *enjoyed* it *longer* than you *deſerved*, or than he *promiſed* you; and now that he is come and *claims* his *Intereſt* in it, it is but a *fitting* and *becoming* thing that you ſhould *ſit ſtill* and be *ſatisfied* in his Will.

Secondly, Conſider ſome Arguments in reference to *our ſelves*, for the moderating of our *Griefs* and *Sorrows* under the *loſs* of *Friends* and *Relations*: And here conſider,

First, *Who or what are we, that we ſhould be diſcontented or repine at the dealings of the all-wiſe God with us?* Alas, if we reflect upon our *Original*, what is it? *Duſt* and *Aſhes*, and out of thence formed by *God* to be his *Creatures*; for it is he that *hath made us, and not we our ſelves*; and this ſhews our *weakneſs* and *impotency*: But this is not all, we are not only *God's Creatures*, made by him, and depending upon him; but we are *ſinful Creatures* that have *rebelled* againſt him; the *Poſterity* of *Sinful* and *Apoſtate Parents*, that have loſt our *Primitive Beauty* and *Excellency*, whereby we did *bear* the *Image* and *Reſemblance* of *God* in *Holineſs*, which is the *Glory* of *God* himſelf; and are run in *Debt* unto his *Juſtice*, more than *we* or all the *Men* on *Earth*; yea, or all the *Saints* and *Angels* in *Heaven* are able to *pay*. This *God* to whom we thus ſtand *indebted*, is become our great *Benefactor*, gives us all we *enjoy*, *maintains* us continually at his own proper *Coſt* and *Charges*; for we have nothing but what we *receive* from Him; it is his *Corn* and *Wine* that *feeds* and *nouriſheth* us, his *Wool* and *Flax* that *covers* our *Nakedneſs*; his *Silver* and *Gold* that *enricheth* us, *Hoſ.* 2. 8, 9. He *fram'd* us and *faſhion'd* us in the *Womb*, and *gave* us all the *Limbs* and *Parts* of our *Bodies*, ſo that we were *born* neither *maimed* nor *monſtrous*; he *endued* us with *Reaſon* and *Underſtanding*; it is he that is the *God* of our *Health* and *Strength*; our *Peace*, our *Plenty*, *flow* from his *Bounty* and *Goodneſs* to us; yea, our very *Lives* and *Beings* are from him, for *in him, we live and move*, and *have*

our

our Beings. We are but *Worms*, and if he *tread* upon any of us, he *leaves* us *dead* behind him. So *infinitely below* him are we, that if we do that which is *good*, we cannot *benefit* him; and if we will *venture* upon that which is *evil*, we cannot *hurt* him. Now the *Contention* is between this *great* and *mighty*, yea *Almighty* God, the *Creator* and *Governour* of all *Things* and *Persons*, and us *poor*, *low*, *sinful Dust* and *Ashes*, who shall have *their Wills* in the *disposing* of our *Friends* and *Relations*, but his own *Creatures*, whether *God's Will* shall stand or *ours*: We may *pretend* what we will to *excuse* our *selves*; but the plain *Truth* of things lies in this *Contest*, *whose will* shall *take place*, *Gods*, or *ours*; whether *he*, or *we* shall have the *disposing* of our *selves* and *ours*: But it is in *vain* to contend with him; for as *he will*, so it is *fitting* he *should* do with *us* and *ours* as he *pleaseth*, whether we *will* or *no*. What saith *Elihu*, *Job* 34. 33. Should it *be according to our Minds*, *he will recompence*, *whether we refuse*, *or whether we chuse*. There is no *good* to be *got* by *contending* with one that is so *infinitely above* us; our *wisest* way is to be *dumb* and hold our *Peace* when *God* pleads with us by any *Affliction*. Doth not *God* do all things *well*? Do we not all stand *amazed* at that *infinite Wisdom*, by which the *Heavens* and *Earth*, and all the *Creatures* in both were *made*, and by which they are all *governed* and *disposed*? Doubtless there is nothing *amiss* in his *Administrations*; he cannot be *subject* to any *Error*, who is *Wisdom* it self; all his *Works* are *perfect* and *good*? Who dare pretend to find *fault* with what *God* doth: *Shall mortal Man be more wise than his Maker*? Have you lost *sweet* and *lovely Children*, or dear *Yoke-fellows*? Lay your *hands* upon your *Mouths*, be not *discontented*, but *acquiesce* in what *God* hath done, for he always doth what is

best:

beſt for his; at preſent they cannot *ſee* it, it may be, but they ſhall do *hereafter*; and in the *mean time* it is their *Duty* to *believe* and to *truſt* in him. It is not for us to have the *Keys* of *Life* and *Death* to hang at our *Girdle*, to let in and out at our *Pleaſure*; *Heaven* then would be *empty* enough, for our *Friends* ſhould not *go* yet if we could help it; and our *Enemies* ſhould never come there if we could *hinder* them. Our *Relations* would then *live* too long, and our *Enemies* would *die too ſoon*. But theſe things whatever we ſay or think to the contrary, are ruled by an *All wiſe Providence*, to which we *our ſelves* and all our *Relations* are *ſubjected*: And it will never be well with us, till we can reſign up our *ſelves*, our *Relations*, and all our *Comforts* unto his *wiſe diſpoſal*, and ſay not our *Wills*, but thy *Will*, *O Lord*, *be done*.

Secondly, Conſider, *your weeping and mourning for the loſs of your Friends and Relations, is but a vain, vexatious thing; it is that which will do you no good, but may do you much hurt*. If a *Bullock* have the *Yoke* faſtened upon him, he may by *ſtruggling* and *ſtriving* make his *Yoke gaul* and *vex* him, but it doth not eaſe him at all thereby. The *Caſe* is ſo with thee, O *Chriſtian*, God hath *afflicted* thee *ſorely*, by taking away thy *Yoke fellow*, or thy *Child*; if thou wilt not *bear* it *patiently*, but *fretteſt* and *murmureſt* againſt *God*, all that thou *getteſt* hereby, is the more *pain* and *ſmart*, but thou doſt not *help* or *eaſe* thy ſelf in the leaſt: What our *Lord* ſaith of our *caring* for the *things* of this *life*, is true in *grieving* for the *loſſes* we ſuſtain in this *life*; *Which of you*, ſays he, *by taking thought, can add one Cubit to his Stature?* Matth. 6. 27. *Cares* may *break* our *hearts*, and *ſhorten* our *days*, but they cannot *add* to our *Stature*: So *Sorrows* under

under *losses* may *break* our *Rest*, and *rend* our *hearts*; yea, they may hasten our *death*; for *worldly Sorrow causeth death*, but it cannot *repair* our *losses* nor *help* us under them. When the *Hand of God* is upon any of our *Relations*, by *Sicknesses* and *Distempers*, and the purpose of *God* in reference unto their *Death* is unknown to us. There is now *room* for *Fasting* and *Prayer*, that the *Evil threatned* and *feared* may not come upon us; *Tears* and *Cries* unto *God* now have the *nature* and *use* of *means* to prevent an *Affliction* from coming upon us: But when *once* the *purpose* of *God* is *manifested*, and the *fatal stroke* is given, it is the *vainest* thing in the World to *fret* and *vex* our *selves* because our *Relations* are *dead*. Holy *David* therefore, when *God* had smitten his *Child* with *Sickness*, being desirous of its *life*, he betakes himself to *Fasting* and *Prayer* unto *God*, 2 *Sam.* 12. and 22. For, says he, *who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the Child may live.* But when once *God* had signified his *Will* in the *Death* of the *Child*; now, says he, that it is *dead*, *wherefore should I fast?* It is in *vain* for me to *fast* and *pray* now, *Can I bring it back again?* No, I cannot. *I shall go to it, but it shall not return to me.* But this is not all; our *mourning* and *weeping* for our *departed Friends* and *Relations* is not only in *vain*, that is, it doth us no *good*, but it many times doth much *hurt*; for *God* is not *glorified*, but *dishonoured* by our *repining* at his *Providence*; but we our *selves* also are *injured*, for hereby we are rendred *unfit* for his *Service*, both in our *general* and *particular Callings*, as we are *Men*, and much more as we are *Christians*. Cast not therefore away your *Tears* and *Sorrows* upon that which will not *benefit* you, but be to your *loss* and *damage*. Turn the *stream* of your *Tears* into a *right Chanel*, there is *use* enough for them, *even*

for

for your *living*, and it may be *lively Sins*, and not for your *dead Relations*.

Thirdly, You that are ſo prone to *grieve* and *mourn* under the *loſs* of your *Relations*, conſider *you your ſelves are making haſte after them*. You are almoſt *ready* to go off the *Stage* of this *World*, and would you have your *Relations* live? It is not likely that we ſhall bear them Company *long* here; when a *few days* more are *paſt* and *gone*, we our ſelves ſhall go *whence we ſhall not return*. It is but a little while, and our *Places* and *Relations* that have known us here, ſhall *know* us again no more for ever. We are marching on, not *fair* and *ſoftly*, but very ſwiftly in the ſame *Road* wherein our *dead* and *lamented Friends* and *Relations* once *walked*, treading out the *marks* of their *Foot-ſteps* while they lived here. We are almoſt ready to *lie down* and *rot* with them in the ſame *Grave*; we dwell in *Houſes* of *Clay* which begin to *crack*; and though we make a ſhift to *daub* and *patch* them up for a while, yet will they ſoon *tumble* down into the *Duſt*, do what we can. Your *dead Relations*, that you are now *mourning* for, are gone but a little before you, and you will *ſoon* be with them; as you come not into the *World* together, ſo you muſt not go out together; it is *God's Will* it ſhould be ſo, and who can *reſiſt* it? Nay, it is *God's* Will it ſhould be ſo, and we muſt *acquieſce* in it; for if we *love God*, we muſt *deny* him nothing that he *requires*; and if we *deny* not our ſelves in our *deareſt Relations* for him, we cannot be his *Diſciples*.

Thirdly, I ſhall now lay down ſome *conſolatory Conſiderations*, in reference to the *Affliction* it ſelf, that any *lie* under by reaſon of the *loſs* of *Friends* and *Relations*. And here conſider,

Firſt, *There muſt be a time when you and your Relations*

Relations must part, and why not now? It is fit we ſhould *wait* upon *God* for the beſtowing of a *Mercy*, and that we ſhould be *Patient* when God takes away a *Mercy*; but it is not *fit* we ſhould know or chooſe the times when *God* will give a *Mercy*, or when he will *take* it away. Every thing is *Beautiful* in its *Seaſon*, ſays the Wiſe Man, and *God* knows when is the *beſt time* for us both to *enjoy* a *Mercy* and to be *Exerciſed* with an *Affliction*. He is *infinite* in *Wiſdom* and cannot be *guilty* of any *miſtake* in any kind whatever. Now this *All-knowing Infinitely Wiſe God* thinks this the *beſt time* for thee to be without thy *Child*, to want thy *Relations*; thou canſt not at preſent *ſee* and *underſtand* the *Work* of *God*, and that this *Affliction* that is now come upon thee, is come in the *beſt* and *fitteſt time* and *Seaſon*. I may here ſay to you what *Chriſt* did to *Peter*, when he was going to *waſh* his *Feet*, John 13. 7. What I do thou *knoweſt* not now, but thou *ſhalt* know hereafter. So ſay I, what *God* is now doing with thee, and what he intends by this *Affliction* thou knoweſt not now, but thou mayeſt know hereafter, and be able to ſay, not only that it was *good* for thee that thou wert *Afflicted*, but that it was *good* for thee that at *ſuch* a *time* and in *ſuch* a *manner* thou wert *Afflicted*, by the *loſs* of ſuch a *Child*, or *ſuch* a *Relation*, *God* hereby *Sanctifying* the *Affliction*, not only for thy *Conviction* of, and *Humiliation* for ſin, the *Evil* whereof thou never wert *acquainted* with before; but for the *diſcovery* of himſelf in *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the *Excellency* and *Beauty* of *Grace* and *Holineſs* unto thy *Soul*, both which thou wert a *Stranger* to as to any *Sanctifying* and ſaving knowledge of them; whereby much *ſin* from that *time* hath been *prevented* in thee, and *much Comfort* in the *ways* of *Holineſs* and *Obedience* from that *time* hath been *experienced* by thee. Let *God* therefore

therefore for the *time* to come have not only the *sorting* of thy *Mercies* and thy *Afflictions*; that is, to *bestow* what *Mercies* he thinks best, on thee, or what *Afflictions* he thinks *meet* upon thee, as to the *kind* of them; but let him also have the *timing* of our *Mercies* and of our *Afflictions*, that is, when is the *fittest time* for us to *enjoy Mercies*, and when is the *fittest time* for us to be without them: for certainly he that is the *Lord* of *Time* is the best Judge of *Time*; and in nothing do we more discover our *Folly* and *Rashness*, than in presuming to fix the times, either of our *Mercies*, or of our *Afflictions*. Leave therefore, *O Christian*, the *timeing* both of the one and of the other unto him, whose *Works* are all *Beautiful* in their *Season*.

Secondly, Consider you that grieve so under the loss of *Friends* and *Relations*, your *Condition might have been worse*. Others have *felt* more, and you *deserve worse*. You have lost a *beloved Child*, or a *dear Friend* and *Relation*, and you *Mourn* as one that will not be *Comforted*; but what is your *loss* unto others? *Aaron* lost *two Sons* at one time, and that by a *strange Judgment* from *God*, Fire coming down from *Heaven* in an extraordinary manner and *consumed* them, and yet *Aaron* held his Peace. *Job* lost all his *Children* suddenly in *one day*, in an unusual manner, and yet *Job* doth not murmur, but *blesses God*, the *Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord*. The Great God might have taken away all thy *Children*, *all* thy *Relations* and *Friends*. *Estate*, *Health*; yea, thy *Life* also. Whatever thou enjoyest it is above thy *desert*, how mean and poor soever it be. Know, *O Christian*, *God exacteth* of thee *far* less *than what thine Iniquities do deserve*. Nothing but *Hell* and *Damnation* answers to the *merit* of *sin*. Wherefore then

should

ſhould a living man complain? ſhall he *murmur* and *repine* becauſe he *lies* under ſome *Temporal Affliction*, who might juſtly be ſent unto *Eternal Torments, where the Worm dieth* not, and the *Fire is not quenched?* Oh inſtead of *Complaining* it is ſo *bad* with you, be thankful it is no *worſe*: Let your *loſs* in your *Friends* and *Relations* be what it will, let your *Condition* be as *bad* as it can be, yet is it *better* with you than it would be in *Hell*, whither your *ſins* deſerve *God* ſhould have ſent you, who hath only laid this *gentle Affliction* upon you, under which you now *groan.*

Thirdly, Conſider your *Friends and Relations, that you grieve and mourn ſo for; if they were good, they are not loſt; they are but gone before, taken from the evil to come.* Thy Friend or Relation whoſe *loſs* thou *bewaileſt*, was either *God's Friend* or *not*, if he was *God's Friend* as well as thine, why ſhould not *God* have his *Company* rather than you? and if *God* hath him, thou canſt not ſay he is *loſt*; no he is *ſafe*, only he hath got the *ſtart* of thee, being *got* to *Heaven* before thee; and ſurely, if thou *lovedſt* him, as by thy *mourning* thou *pretendeſt* to do, thou canſt not *grieve* becauſe he is *Happy.* The *World* is not ſo *pleaſant* a *place*, neither have the *Godly* in any *Age* found it ſo; that any of us ſhould ſo *eagerly* deſire it, either for our *ſelves* or our *Friends.* *Happy* are they that are *got ſafe* out of it into *Glory.* If thy *Friend* for whom thou now grieveſt was *bad*, thou ſhouldſt have *mourned* for him whilſt he was here on *Earth*, when by thy *mourning* thou mightſt have made him *better*; then was the proper, yea the only time for thy *Prayers* and *Tears* to have done him any *good*; but now that he is *gone*, though thou ſhouldſt *weep* and *mourn* never ſo much, it is altogether

gether in *vain* and *unprofitable*. But if thy *Friend* were a *good Man*, to *grieve* for his departure, ſeems to *argue* that we have but *hard*, or *doubtful* and *miſgiving thoughts* concerning him; for how can we *mourn* for one that is *Happy*? beſides thy *Friend* is but taken from the *Evil* to *come*. The *Grave* becomes a *hiding-place* for ſome, and *God* ſees it *better* for them that they ſhould be *under ground* than *above ground* in ſuch *evil days*; that they may not behold the *Evil* that is like to come upon others, ſo ſays the Prophet, *The Righteous are taken away from the evil to come*, and certainly it is *far better* for us to *deſire* to *go* to them, that we may *partake* of their *Happineſs*, than to *wiſh* that they ſhould *come* to us to partake of our *Miſeries*.

Fourthly, *Grieve not immoderately for thy dead Friends and Relations*, for there is hope of their *Reſurrection*, and *Eternal Happineſs*. It is for them to *mourn* without *meaſure*, who *mourn* without *hope*, which no *Chriſtian* ſhould do. We are not to look upon the *dead*, becauſe at preſent they are turned to *Corruption* and *Rottenneſs*, as a *loſt Generation of Men*; for *Death* hath not, nor cannot *Annihilliate* and *deſtroy* them. A *Believer* may ſay of his *dead Friends* and *Relations*, what the *Diſciples* ſaid unto *Chriſt* when he told them, *Our Friend Lazarus ſleepeth. Lord* ſay they, *if he ſleep he ſhall do well*, John 11. 12. the ſame may *Believers* ſay of their *Friends* and *Relations* that are *aſleep* in their *Graves*, they ſhall *do well*, for they ſhall *awake* again: ſo ſays the *Church*, Iſaiah 26. 19. *Awake and ſing ye that dwell in the duſt, for thy dew is as the dew of Herbs, and the Earth ſhall caſt out the dead.* Now we do not uſe to *weep* and *mourn* for our *Friends* and *Relations* when they lie

lie down at *night* to take a *ſhort ſleep* in their *Beds*, becauſe we know they uſe to *awake* and *ariſe* again in the *morning*: And why then ſhould we be *grieved* and *troubled*, when they come to *lie down* in the *duſt*; and make their *Beds* for a while in the *Grave*, ſleeping away *time* by *Death* until the *morning* of the *Reſurrection*; when they ſhall *as ſurely*, nay more *ſurely awake* and *ariſe* out of their *Graves* than they were certain in the *morning* of any *day* to *awake* and *ariſe* out of their *Beds*? And therefore the *Apoſtle* brings it in as a *Cordial*, for the ſupport of *Believers* under the *loſs* of their *Friends* and *Relations* by *Death*, 1 Theſſal. 4. 13, 14. *I would not have you to be ignorant Brethren, concerning them which are aſleep, that ye ſorrow not even as thoſe that have no hope, for if we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo them alſo which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.* And ſo he goes on proving the *Doctrine* of the *Reſurrection*, and concludes with this, *ſo ſhall we be ever with the Lord; wherefore*, ſays he, *Comfort one another with theſe words.* When *Believers* die, tho' their *Bodies* ſeem to *periſh* in the *Earth*, yet even then, is their very *duſt precious* in his *ſight*, for he takes care of it and preſerves it in the *Grave*; and he will certainly *raiſe* it again at the *laſt day* unto a moſt *Glorious State of Happineſs*; and even then at that inſtant, when their *Souls* leave their *Bodies*, they *aſcend* up into *Heaven* into the *Preſence* and *Enjoyment* of *God* in *Glory*. As our *Saviour* therefore ſaid unto his *Diſciples* when he was going *away* from them into *Heaven*, in *John* 14. 28. *If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, becauſe I go unto my Father.* The ſame may *dying Believers* ſay unto their *Friends* and *Relations* that they leave behind them, *if ye loved us, ye would rejoyce, becauſe we are going unto our God and Father*; weep not therefore

therefore for *us*, but weep for *your ſelves*, who are forbidden for a while to *follow* us unto that *State* of *Bleſſedneſs*, which we are now a going to take *Poſſeſſion* of for *ever*.

Now for a *Concluſion* of this *Subject*, I have but one thing more to add, which may be an Argument of great force and ſtrength to prevail upon the *Spirits* of *Chriſtians*, not only to make them *willing* and *contented* to *die*, but to *ſtir* up in them a *Holy longing* of *Soul* after *Death*; and that is to conſider the *Saints* great *gain* and *advantage* by *dying*. Now here I ſhall not branch out this Head into ſeveral particulars relating to the *Happineſs* of *Believers* in *Heaven* becauſe I intend a particular Diſcourſe of the *Happineſs* thereof by it ſelf; all that I ſhall ſay now concerning the *gain* of *Believers* by *Death*, ſhall be only in *General*. And ſo let all ſuch know, that when they *die*, they ſhall be *perfectly freed* from whatſoever is *Evil* and *Afflictive*; and ſhall have a *perfect Enjoyment* of whatever is *beneficial* and *good*, they ſhall be *perfectly freed* from whatſoever is *Evil* and *Afflictive*; there ſhall then be no more *ſorrowing*, or *weeping*, for *Heaven*, whither *Death* brings all *Believers*, is the *place* of the *Joy* of their *Lord*, where *Tears* are *wip'd* away from all *Eyes*, and *Sorrow* from all *Hearts*; for *thither the Ranſom'd of the Lord are come with Songs upon their heads, and obtain Joy and Gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away*, Iſaiah 35, and the *laſt*. Where they *live* without *fear*, which here makes the lives of many *burthenſome* unto them; for all cauſe of *fears* are there for ever *aboliſhed* and taken away. There are no *Deformities* upon the *Body* to render it *Contemptible*, nor no *Reproaches* upon the *Name* to make it *Scandalous*; there is no *Sickneſs* or *Diſtempers* upon the *outward*

ward Man, nor no *Deſertions* or *Darkneſs* upon the *inward* Man; there are no *Temptations* from *Satan* to *vex* the Soul, nor no *Weakneſſes* and *Infirmities* to annoy the *Body*; there's no more *Death* or *Dying*, but *Life* for evermore; *Mortality* is now ſwallowed up of *Life*, Corruption hath put on Incorruption, and Mortality hath put on Immortality, and *Death* and *Hell* are caſt into the *Lake* of *Fire*, and which is more than all this, there, that is in *Heaven*, we ſhall no more *ſin* nor *offend God* to all *Eternity*, *Earth* and *Hell* are the *places* both of *ſin* and *Suffering*, but *Heaven* is a *place* of perfect *Joy* and perfect *Holineſs*; nothing enters in there that is either *Afflictive*, *Polluted*, or *Defiled*. When *Death* parts *Soul* and *Body* for a time, then *Sin* and the *Soul* part for ever. Here we are *continually* ſinning and offending of *God*, and it is the *conſtant grief* of a Godly Man that he doth ſo; here our *Righteouſneſſes* are no better than *filthy rags*, and *Grace* it ſelf hath its *defects*; when we believe moſt ſtrongly, we muſt cry out, *Lord*, help our *unbelief*: but now in *Heaven* there are none, but the *Spirits* of *Juſt Men* made *perfect*. In a word, there is nothing there, that may in the leaſt be an *Allay* or *Diminution* unto the *Happineſs* of that *bleſſed State*, that is there enjoyed to *Eternity*.

But this is not all, *Death* doth not only *free Believers* from all that is *Evil* and *Afflictive*, but it brings them to the *perfect Enjoyment* of whatever is *beneficial* and *good*; *Death* being the means and way by which they *enter* into *Heaven*, where Bleſſedneſs and Happineſs is to be *enjoyed* in ſuch *fulneſs* of *perfection*, as *exceeds* not only our *Apprehenſions*, but our *Imaginations*. For there it is that the *infinitely great* and *bleſſed God* diſcovers himſelf in all his *Glory*, to be enjoyed by the *Saints* as their

their Portion to *Eternity*. There it is that they ſhall behold their once *bleeding* and *dying*, but now *Glorified Redeemer*, Cloathed in their *own Nature*; who *loved them and waſhed them from their ſins in his own blood*, who was *dead* but is *alive*, and now *lives* for *ever more*, and becauſe he lives, they ſhall live alſo. There they ſhall *Enjoy* that which was the great *deſire* of the *Apoſtle*, and theirs alſo to be with *Chriſt*, which is *beſt* of all, and how *much bleſſedneſs* is included in thoſe *few words*, to be with *Chriſt*, the enjoyment of *Heaven* only where *Chriſt* is, can make known to us. There it is that *Believers* fully underſtand the meaning of that *Article* of our *Chriſtian Faith*, even the *Communion of Saints*; here it was that they *placed* their *Delight* in the *Saints* the *Excellent* ones of the *Earth*, and there their *Delight* ſhall be in great *meaſure* in the *Saints*, ſome of the *Excellent ones* of *Heaven*. There ſhall then be no *mixture* of *ſin* and *Corruption* with our *Graces*, which here is an *Allay* to the *Luſtre* and *Brightneſs* of them, but they ſhall *Shine* forth in their full *Glory* and *Beauty*. *Grace* there ſhall be in its full *Perfection*; nothing ſhall then be *wanting* in our *Knowledge*, nor any thing *imperfect* in our *Love*, our *Obedience* ſhall then *flow* from us with all *readineſs* and *chearfulneſs* of *Soul*, and our *Joy* and *Delight* in *God* ſhall not admit of the leaſt *Diminution* or Diſturbance to *Eternity*. This, O *Soul*, is that in general which the Happineſs of *Heaven* is made up of, and to the *Enjoyment* of this *Happineſs* without *Interruption* or *Ceſſation* for ever, is that to which *Death* brings all *Believers*. And ſurely if ever thoſe words have any *Truth* in them, they are here verified, ſo that a *Saint* may truly ſay, *The lines are now fallen to me in a pleaſant place, I have a goodly Heritage*. O *Bleſſed* and

Glorious

Glorious State indeed! who is there that *knows* and *believes* this infinite unconceivable *Happiness*, that would not *willingly die* to enjoy it? Unto which *State* of *Blessedness*, *God* of his *infinite Mercy* bring us all to the *Enjoyment* of, for the alone sake of *Jesus Christ* our only *Saviour* and *Redeemer*. Amen.

FINIS.